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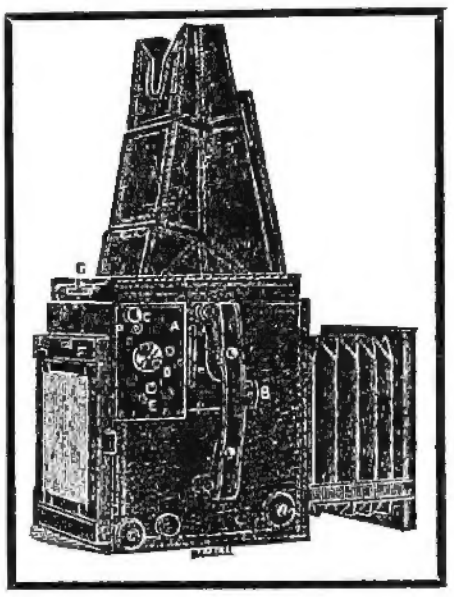

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THE
ENGLISH REVIEW
DECEMBER 1908

A Sunday Morning Tragedy

By Thomas Hardy

(*circa* 1860)

I BORE a daughter flower-fair,
Yea, flower-fair, alas for me ;
I joyed to mother one so rare,
But dead and gone I now would be.

Men looked and loved her as she grew,
And she was won, alas for me ;
She told me nothing, but I knew,
And saw that sorrow was to be :

I knew that one had made her thrall,
A thrall to him, alas for me ;
And then, at last, she told me all,
And wondered what her end would be.

She owned that she had loved too well,
Had loved too well, unhappy she,
And bore a secret time would tell,
Though in her shroud she'd sooner be.

I plodded to her sweetheart's door,
Went to his door, alas for me.
I pleaded with him, pleaded sore,
To save her from her misery.

He frowned, and swore he could not wed,
Seven times he swore it could not be ;
" Poverty's worse than shame," he said,
Till all my hope went out of me.

" I've packed my traps to sail the main,"
Roughly he spake, alas did he.
" Wessex beholds me not again,
'Tis worse than any jail would be ! "

—There was a shepherd whom I knew,
A subtle man, alas for me :
I sought him all the pastures through,
Though better I had ceased to be.

I traced him by his lantern light,
And gave him hint, alas for me,
Of how she found her in the plight
That is so scorned by Christendie.

" Is there an herb . . . ? " I asked. " Or none ? "
Yes, thus I asked him desperately.
" There is," he said ; " a certain one . . ."
Would he had sworn naught such to be.

" To-morrow I will walk your way,"
He hinted low, alas for me.—
Fieldwards I gazed throughout next day ;
Now fields I never more would see !

The sunset shine, as curfew strook,
As curfew strook beyond the lea,
Lit his white smock and gleaming crook
While slowly he drew near to me.

He pulled from underneath his smock
The herb I sought, my curse to be—
" At times I use it in my flock,"
He said, and hope waxed strong in me.

" 'Tis meant to balk ill-motherings "—
(Ill-motherings ! Why should they be ?)—
" If not, would God have sent such things ? "
So spoke the shepherd unto me.

That night I watched the poppling brew,
With bended back and hand on knee :
I stirred it till the dawn-light grew,
While the wind whiffled wailfully.

A SUNDAY MORNING TRAGEDY

" This scandal shall be slain," said I,
" That lours upon her innocency :
I'll give all whispering tongues the lie " ;
But worse than whispers was to be.

" Here's physic for untimely fruit,"
I said to her, alas for me,
Early that morn in fond salute ;
And in my grave I now would be.

—Next Sunday came, with sweet church chimes ;
Next Sunday came, alas for me :
I went into her room betimes ;
No more may such a Sunday be !

" Mother, instead of rescue nigh,"
She faintly breathed, alas for me,
" I feel as I were like to die,
And underground soon, soon should be."

From church that noon the people walked
In twos and threes, alas for me,
Showed their new raiment,—smiled and talked,
Though sackcloth-clad I longed to be.

Came to my door her lover's friends,
And cheerly cried, alas for me,
" Right glad are we he makes amends,
For never a sweeter bride can be."

My mouth dried, as 'twere scorched within,
Dried at their words, alas for me :
More and more neighbours crowded in,
(O why should mothers ever be !)

" Ha-ha ! Such well-kept news ! " laughed they
Yes—so they laughed, alas for me :
" Whose banns were called in church to-day ? "—
Christ, how I wished I could un-be !—

" Where is she ? O the stealthy miss,"
Still bantered they, alas for me,
" To keep a wedding close as this . . ."
Ay, Fortune worked thus wantonly !

" But you are pale—you did not know ? "
They archly asked, alas for me.
I stammered, " Yes—some days—ago,"
While coffined clay I wished to be.

" 'Twas done to please her we surmise ? "—
They spoke quite lightly in their glee,
"—Done by him as a fond surprise ? "
I thought their words would madden me.

Her lover entered. " Where's my bird ?—
My bird—my flower—my picotee ?
First time of asking, soon the third ! "
Ah, in my grave I well may be.

To me he whispered : " Since your call "—
So spoke he then, alas for me,
" I've felt for her, and righted all."
—I think of it to agony.

"She's faint to-day—tired—nothing more "—
Thus did I lie, alas for me. . . .
I called her at her chamber-door
As one who scarce had strength to be.

No voice replied. I went within,—
O women ! scourged the worst are we. . . .
I shrieked. The others hastened in
And saw the stroke there dealt at me.

There she lay—silent, breathless, dead—
Stone dead she lay—wronged, sinless she !—
Ghost-white the cheeks once rosy red :
Death had took her : Death took not me.

I kissed her colding face and hair,
I kissed her corpse—the bride to be !—
My punishment I cannot bear,
But pray God *not* to pity me.

January 1904.

The Jolly Corner

By Henry James

I

"Every one asks me what I 'think' of everything," said Spencer Brydon; "and I make answer as I can—begging or dodging the question, putting them off with any nonsense. It wouldn't matter to any of them really," he went on, "for, even were it possible to meet in that stand-and-deliver way so silly a demand on so big a subject, my 'thoughts' would still be almost altogether about something that concerns only myself." He was talking to Miss Staverton, with whom, for a couple of months now, he had availed himself of every possible occasion to talk; this disposition and this resource, this comfort and support, as the matter in fact presented itself, having promptly enough taken the first place among the surprises, as he would have called them, attending his so strangely belated return to America. Everything was somehow a surprise; and that might be natural when one had so long and so consistently neglected everything, taken pains to give surprises so much margin for preparation. He had given them more than thirty years—thirty-three, to be exact; and they now seemed to him to have organised their performance quite on the scale of that licence. He had been twenty-three on leaving New York—he was fifty-six to-day: unless indeed he were to reckon as he had sometimes, since his repatriation, found himself feeling, in which case he would have lived longer than is often allotted to man. It would have taken a century, he repeatedly said to himself, and said also to Alice Staverton, it would have taken a longer absence and a more averted mind than those even of which he had been guilty, to pile up the differences, the newnesses, the queernesses, above all the bignesses, for the better or the worse, that at present assaulted his vision wherever he looked.

The great fact all the while, however, had been the incalculability; since he *had* supposed himself, from decade to decade, to be allowing, and in the most liberal and intelligent

manner, for brilliancy of change. He actually saw that he had allowed for nothing; he missed what he would have been sure of finding, he found what he would never have imagined. Proportions and values were upside-down; the ugly things he had expected, the ugly things of his far-away youth, when he had too promptly waked up to a sense of the ugly—these uncanny phenomena placed him rather, as it happened, under the charm; whereas the "swagger" things, the modern, the monstrous, the famous things, those he had more particularly, like thousands of ingenuous inquirers every year, come over to see, were exactly his sources of dismay. They were as so many set traps for displeasure, above all for reaction, of which his restless tread was constantly pressing the spring. It was interesting, doubtless, the whole show, but it would have been too disconcerting had not a certain finer truth saved the situation. He had distinctly not, in this steadier light, come over *all* for the monstrosities; he had come, not only in the last analysis but quite on the face of the act, under an impulse with which they had nothing to do. He had come (putting the thing pompously) to look at his "property," which he had thus, for a third of a century, not been within four thousand miles of; or, expressing it less sordidly, he had yielded to the humour of seeing again his house on the jolly corner, as he usually, and quite fondly, described it—the one in which he had first seen the light, in which various members of his family had lived and had died, in which the holidays of his overschooled boyhood had been passed and the few social flowers of his chilled adolescence gathered, and which, alienated then for so long a period, had, through the successive deaths of his two brothers and the termination of old arrangements, come wholly into his hands. He was the owner of another not quite so "good"—the jolly corner having been, from far back, superlatively extended and consecrated; and the value of the pair represented his main capital, with an income consisting, in these later years, of their respective rents, which (thanks precisely to their original excellent type) had never been depressingly low. He could live in "Europe," as he had been in the habit of living, on the product of these flourishing New York leases, and all the better since that of the second structure, the mere number in its long row, having within a twelvemonth fallen in, renovation at a high advance had proved beautifully possible.

These were items of property indeed, but he had found himself since his arrival distinguishing more than ever between them. The house within the street, two bristling stretches

westward, was already in course of reconstruction as a tall mass of flats ; he had acceded some time before to overtures for this conversion—in which, now that it was going forward, it had been not the least of his astonishments to find himself able, on the spot and though without an ounce of such experience, to participate with a certain intelligence, almost with a certain competence. He had lived his life with his back so turned to such concerns and his face addressed to those of so different an order, that he scarce knew what to make of this lively stir, in a compartment of his mind never yet penetrated, of a capacity for business and a sense for construction. These virtues, so common all round him now, had been dormant in his own organism—where it might be said of them perhaps that they had slept the sleep of the just. At present, in the splendid autumn weather—the autumn at least *was* a pure boon in the terrible place—he loafed about his " work " undeterred, secretly agitated ; not in the least " minding " that the whole proposition, as they said, was vulgar and sordid, and ready to climb ladders, to walk the plank, to handle materials and look wise about them, to ask questions, in fine, and challenge explanations and really " go into " figures.

It amused, it verily quite charmed ; and, by the same stroke, it amused, and even more, Alice Staverton, though perhaps charming her perceptibly less. She wasn't, however, going to be better off for it, as *he* was—and so astonishingly much : nothing was now likely, he knew, ever to make her better off than she found herself, in the afternoon of life, as the delicately frugal possessor and tenant of the small house in Irving Place to which she had subtly managed to cling through her almost unbroken New York career. If he knew the way to it now better than to any other address among the dreadful multiplied numberings which seemed to him to reduce the whole place to some vast ledger-page, overgrown, fantastic, of ruled and criss-crossed lines and figures—if he had formed, for his consolation, that habit, it was really not a little because of the charm of his having encountered and recognised in the vast wilderness of the wholesale, breaking through the mere gross generalisation of wealth and force and success, a small, still scene where items and shades, all delicate things, kept the sharpness of the notes of a high voice perfectly trained, and where economy hung about like the scent of a garden. His old friend lived with one maid and herself dusted her relics and trimmed her lamps and polished her silver ; she stood off, in the awful modern crush, when she could, but she sallied forth and did battle when the challenge

was really to " spirit," the spirit she after all confessed to, proudly and a little shyly, as to that of the better time, that of *their* common, their quite far-away and antediluvian social period and order. She made use of the street-cars when need be, the terrible things that people scrambled for as the panic-stricken at sea scramble for the boats ; she affronted inscrutably, under stress, all the public concussions and ordeals ; and yet with that slim mystifying grace of her appearance, which defied you to say if she were a fair young woman who looked older through trouble, or a fine smooth older one who looked young through successful indifference ; with her precious reference, above all, to memories and histories into which he could enter, she was exquisite for him like some pale pressed flower (a rarity to begin with), and, failing other sweetnesses, she was a sufficient reward of his effort. They had communities of knowledge, " their " knowledge (this discriminating possessive was always on her lips) of presences of the other age, presences all overlaid, in his case, by the experience of a man and the freedom of a wanderer, overlaid by pleasure, by infidelity, by passages of life that were strange and dim to her, just by " Europe " in short, but still unobscured, still exposed and cherished, under that pious visitation of the spirit from which she had never been diverted.

She had come with him one day to see how his " apartment-house " was rising ; he had helped her over gaps and explained to her plans, and while they were there had happened to have, before her, a brief but lively discussion with the man in charge, the representative of the building firm that had undertaken his work. He had found himself quite " standing up " to this personage over a failure on the latter's part to observe some detail of one of their noted conditions, and had so lucidly argued his case that, besides ever so prettily flushing, at the time, for sympathy in his triumph, she had afterwards said to him (though to a slightly greater effect of irony) that he had clearly for too many years neglected a real gift. If he had but stayed at home he would have anticipated the inventor of the sky-scraper. If he had but stayed at home he would have discovered his genius in time really to develop streets and to harvest a fortune. He was to remember these words, while the weeks elapsed, for the little silver ring with which he might feel that they had died away in the queerest and deepest of his own lately most disguised and most muffled vibrations.

It had begun to be present to him after the first fortnight, it had broken out with the oddest abruptness, this particular

wanton wonderment : it met him there—and this was the image under which he himself judged the matter, or at least, not a little, thrilled and flushed with it—very much as he might have been met by some strange figure, some unexpected occupant, at a turn of one of the dim passages of an empty house. The quaint analogy quite hauntingly remained with him, when he didn't indeed rather improve it by a still intenser form : that of his opening a door behind which he would have made sure of finding nothing, a door into a room shuttered and void, and yet so coming, with a great suppressed start, on some quite erect confronting presence, something planted in the middle of the place and facing him through the dusk. After that visit to the house in construction he walked with his companion to see the other and always so much the better one, which, in the eastward direction, formed one of the corners of the street now so generally dishonoured and disfigured in its westward reaches and of the comparatively conservative Avenue. The Avenue had still pretensions, as Miss Staverton said, to decency ; the old people had gone, mostly, the old names were unknown, and here and there an old association seemed to stray, all vaguely, like some very aged person, out too late, whom you might meet and feel the impulse to watch or follow, in kindness, for safe restoration to shelter.

They went in together, our friends ; he admitted himself with his key, as he kept no one there, he explained, preferring, for his reasons, to leave the place empty, under a simple arrangement with a good woman living in the neighbourhood who came for a daily hour to open windows and dust and sweep. Spencer Brydon had his reasons, and was growingly aware of them ; they seemed to him better each time he arrived, though he didn't name them all to his companion, any more than he told her as yet how often, how quite absurdly often, he himself came. He only let her see for the present, while they walked through the great blank rooms, that absolute vacancy reigned and that, from top to bottom, there was nothing but Mrs. Muldoody's broomstick, in a corner, to tempt the burglar. Mrs. Muldoody was then on the premises, and she loquaciously attended the visitors, preceding them from room to room and pushing back shutters and throwing up sashes—all to show them, as she remarked, how little there was to see. There was little indeed to see in the great gaunt shell, where the main dispositions and the general apportionment of space, the style of an age of ampler allowances, had nevertheless, for its master, their honest, pleading message, affecting him as some good old servant's, some

life-long retainer's appeal for a character, or even for a retiring pension; yet it was also a remark of Mrs. Muldoody's that, glad as she was to oblige him by her noonday round, there was a request she greatly hoped he would never make of her. If he should wish her for any reason to come in after dark she would just tell him, if he "plased," that he must ask it of somebody else.

The fact that there was nothing to see didn't militate, for the worthy woman, against what one *might* see, and she put it frankly to Miss Staverton that no lady could be expected to like—could she?—"craping up to thim top storeys in the ayvil hours." The gas and the electric light were off the house, and she fairly evoked a gruesome vision of her march through the great grey rooms—so many of them as there were too!—with her glimmering taper. Miss Staverton met her honest glare with a smile and the profession that she herself certainly would recoil from such an adventure. Spencer Brydon meanwhile held his peace—for the moment; the question of the "evil" hours in his old home had already become too grave for him. He had begun some time since to "crape," and he knew just why a packet of candles, addressed to that pursuit, had been stowed by his own hand, three weeks before, at the back of a drawer of the fine old sideboard that occupied as a "fixture" the deep recess in the dining-room. For the present he laughed at his companions—quickly, however, changing the subject; for the reason that in the first place his laugh struck him even at that moment as starting the odd echo, the conscious human resonance (he scarce knew how to qualify it) that sounds made while he was there alone sent back to his ear or his fancy; and that in the second he imagined Alice Staverton, for the instant, on the point of asking him, with a divination, if he ever so prowled. There were divinations he was unprepared for, and he had at all events averted inquiry by the time Mrs. Muldoody had left them, passing on to other parts.

There was happily enough to say, on so consecrated a spot, that could be said freely and fairly; so that a whole train of declarations was precipitated by his friend's having herself broken out, after a yearning look round: "But I hope you don't mean they want to pull *this* to pieces!" His answer came, promptly, with his reawakened wrath: it was of course exactly what they wanted and what they were "at" him for, daily, with the pertinacity of people who couldn't for their life understand a man's having a decent feeling. He had found the place, just as it stood and beyond what he could express,

an interest and a joy. There were values other than the beastly rent-values, and in short, in short——! But it was here that Miss Staverton took him up. "In short you're to make so good a thing of your sky-scraper that, living in luxury on *those* ill-gotten gains, you can afford for a while to be sentimental here!" Her smile had for him, with the words, the particular mild irony with which he found half her talk suffused; an irony without bitterness and that came, exactly, from her having so much imagination—not, like the cheap sarcasms with which one heard most people, about the world of "society," bid for the reputation of cleverness, from nobody's really having any. It was agreeable to him at this very moment to be sure that when he had answered, after a brief demur, "Well, yes: so, precisely, you may put it!" her imagination would still do him justice. He explained that even if never a dollar were to come to him from the other house he would nevertheless cherish this one; and he dwelt, further, while they lingered and wandered, on the fact of the stupefaction he was already exciting, the positive mystification he felt himself create.

He spoke of the value of all he read into it, into the mere sight of the walls, mere shapes of the rooms, mere sound of the floors, mere feel, in his hand, of the old silver-plated knobs of the several mahogany doors, which suggested the pressure of the palms of the dead; the seventy years of the past, in short, that these things represented, the annals of nearly three generations, counting his grandfather's, the one that had ended there, and the impalpable ashes of his long-extinct youth, afloat in the very air like microscopic motes. She listened to everything; she was a woman who answered but who didn't chatter. She scattered abroad therefore no cloud of words; she could assent, she could agree, above all she could encourage, without doing that. Only at the last she went a little further than he had done himself. "And then how do you know? You may still, after all, want to live here." It rather indeed pulled him up. for it wasn't what he had been thinking, at least in her sense of the words. "You mean I may decide to stay on for the sake of it?"

"Well, *with* such a home——!" But, quite beautifully, she had too much tact to dot so monstrous an i, and it was precisely an illustration of the way she didn't rattle. How could any one—of any wit—insist on any one else's "wanting" to live in New York?

"Oh," he said, "I *might* have lived here (since I had my opportunity early in life); I might have put in here all these

years. Then everything would have been different enough—
—and I daresay 'funny' enough. But that's another matter. And then the beauty of it—I mean of my perversity, of my refusal to agree to a 'deal'—is just in the total absence of a reason. Don't you see that if I had a reason about the matter at all it would *have* to be the other way and would then be inevitably a reason of dollars? There are no reasons here *but* of dollars. Let us therefore have none whatever—not the ghost of one."

They were thus back in the hall for departure, but from where they stood the vista was large, through an open door, into the great square main saloon, with its almost antique felicity of brave intervals between windows. Her eyes quitted that long reach and met his own a moment. "Are you very sure the 'ghost' of one doesn't much rather serve——?"

He had a positive sense of turning pale. But it was as near as they were then to come. For he made answer, he believed, between a glare and a grin: "Oh, ghosts—of course the place must swarm with them! I should be ashamed of it if it didn't. Poor Mrs. Muldoody's right, and it's why I haven't asked her to do more than look in."

Miss Staverton's gaze again lost itself, and things that she didn't utter, it was clear, came and went in her mind. She might even for the minute, off there in the fine room, have imagined some element dimly gathering. Simplified like the death-mask of a handsome face, it perhaps produced for her just then an effect akin to the stir of an expression in the "set" commemorative plaster. Yet whatever her impression may have been she uttered instead of it a vague platitude. "Well, if it were only furnished and lived in——!"

She appeared to imply that in case of its being still furnished he might have been a little less opposed to the idea of a return. But she passed straight into the vestibule, as if to leave her words behind her, and the next moment he had opened the house-door and was standing with her on the steps. He closed the door and while he repocketed his key, looking up and down, they took in the comparatively harsh actuality of the Avenue, which reminded him of the assault of the outer light of the Desert on the traveller emerging from an Egyptian tomb. But he risked before they stepped into the street his gathered answer to her speech. "For me it *is* lived in. For me it *is* furnished." At which it was easy for her to sigh "Ah yes——!" very vaguely and discreetly, since his parents and his favourite sister, to say nothing of other kin, in numbers, had run their course and met

their end there. That represented, within the walls, ineffaceable life.

It was a few days after this that, during an hour passed with her again, he had expressed his impatience of the too flattering curiosity—among the people he met—about his appreciation of New York. He had arrived at none at all that was socially producible, and as for that matter of his "thinking" (thinking the better or the worse of anything there) he was wholly taken up with one subject of thought. It was mere vain egoism, and it was moreover, if she liked, a morbid obsession. He found all things come back to the question of what he personally might have been, how he might have led his life and "turned out," if he had not so at the outset given it up. And confessing for the first time to the intensity within him of this absurd speculation —which but proved too, no doubt, the habit of selfishly thinking—he affirmed the impotence there of any other source of interest, any other local appeal. "What would it have made of me, what would it have made of me? I keep for ever wondering, all idiotically; as if I could possibly know! I see what it has made of dozens of others, those I meet, and it positively aches within me, to the point of exasperation, that it would have made something of me as well. Only I can't make out *what*, and the worry of it, the small rage of curiosity, never to be satisfied, brings back what I remember to have felt once or twice after judging best, for reasons, to burn some important letter unopened. I've been sorry, I've hated it—I've never known what was in the letter. You may of course say it's a trifle——!"

"I don't say it's a trifle," Miss Staverton gravely interrupted.

She was seated by her fire, and before her, on his feet and restless, he turned to and fro between this intensity of his idea and a fitful and unseeing inspection, through his single eye-glass, of the dear little old objects on her chimneypiece. Her interruption made him for an instant look at her harder. "I shouldn't care if you did!" he laughed, however; "and it's only a figure, at any rate, for the way I now feel. *Not* to have followed my perverse young course—and almost in the teeth of my father's curse, as I may say; not to have kept it up so, 'over there,' from that day to this, without a doubt or a pang; not, above all, to have liked it, to have loved it, so much, loved it, naturally, with such an abysmal *conceit* of my own preference: some variation from *that*, I say, must have produced some different effect for my life and for my 'form.' I should have stuck here—if it had been possible; and I was too young, at twenty-three,

to judge, *pour deux sous*, whether it *were* possible. If I had waited I might have seen it was, and then I might have been, by staying here, something nearer to one of these types who have been hammered so hard and made so keen by their conditions. It isn't that I admire them so much—the question of any charm in them, or of any charm beyond that of the rank money-passion exerted by their conditions *for* them, has nothing to do with the matter; it's only a question of what fantastic, yet perfectly possible, development of my own nature I may not have missed. It comes over me that I had then a strange *alter ego* deep down somewhere within me, as the full-blown flower is in the small tight bud, and that I just took the course, I just transferred him to the climate, that blighted him at once and for ever."

"And you wonder about the flower," Miss Staverton said. "So do I, if you want to know; and so I've been wondering these several weeks. I believe in the flower," she continued. "I feel that it would have been quite splendid, quite huge and monstrous."

"Monstrous above all!" her visitor echoed; "and I imagine, by the same stroke, quite hideous and offensive."

"You don't believe that," she returned; "if you did you wouldn't wonder. You'd know, and that would be enough for you. What you feel—and what I feel for you—if that you'd have had power."

"You'd have liked me that way?" he asked.

She barely hung fire. "How should I not have liked you?"

"I see. You'd have liked me, have preferred me, a billionaire!"

"How should I not have liked you?" she simply again asked.

He stood before her still—her question kept him motionless. He took it in, so much there was of it; and indeed his not otherwise meeting it testified to that. "I know at least what I am," he simply went on; "the other side of the medal is clear enough. I've not been edifying—I believe I'm thought in a hundred quarters to have been barely decent. I've followed strange paths and worshipped strange gods; it must have come to you again and again—in fact you've admitted to me as much—that I was leading, at any time these thirty years, a selfish, frivolous, scandalous life. And you see what it has made of me."

She just waited, smiling at him. "You see what it has made of *me*."

"Oh, you're a person whom nothing can have altered. You

were born to be what you are, anywhere, anyway : you've the perfection nothing else could have touched. And don't you see how, without my exile, I shouldn't have been waiting till now——?" But he pulled up for the strange pang.

"The great thing to see," she presently said, "seems to me to be that it has spoiled nothing. It hasn't spoiled your being here at last. It hasn't spoiled this. It hasn't spoiled your speaking——" She also, however, faltered.

He wondered at everything her controlled emotion might mean. "Do you believe then—too dreadfully!—that I *am* as good as I might ever have been?"

"Oh no! Far from it!" With which she got up from her chair and was nearer him. "But I don't care," she smiled.

"You mean I'm good enough?"

She considered a little. "Will you believe it if I say so? I mean will you let that settle your question for you?" And then as if making out in his face that he drew back from this, that he had some idea which, however absurd, he couldn't yet bargain away : "Oh, you don't care either—but very differently : you don't care for anything but yourself."

Spencer Brydon recognised it—it was in fact what he had absolutely professed. Yet he importantly qualified. "*He* isn't myself. He's the just so totally other person. But I do want to see him," he added. "And I can. And I shall."

Their eyes met for a minute while he guessed from something in hers that she divined his strange sense. But neither of them otherwise expressed it, and her apparent understanding, with no protesting shock, no easy derision, touched him more deeply than anything yet, constituting for his stifled perversity, on the spot, an element that was like breathable air. What she said, however, was unexpected. "Well, *I've* seen him."

"You—?"

"I've seen him in a dream."

"Oh, a 'dream'——!" It let him down.

"But twice over," she continued. "I saw him as I see you now."

"You've dreamed the same dream——?"

"Twice over," she repeated. "The very same."

This did somehow a little speak to him, as it also pleased him. "You dream about me at that rate?"

"Ah, about *him!*" she smiled.

His eyes again sounded her. "Then you know all about him." And as she said nothing more : "What's the wretch like?"

She hesitated, and it was as if he were pressing her so hard that, resisting for reasons of her own, she had to turn away. "I'll tell you some other time!"

II

It was after this that there was most of a virtue for him most of a cultivated charm, most of a preposterous secret thrill, in the particular form of surrender to his obsession and of address to what he more and more believed to be his privilege. It was what in these weeks he was living for—since he really felt life to begin but after Mrs. Muldoody had retired from the scene and, visiting the ample house from attic to cellar, making sure he was alone, he knew himself in safe possession and, as he tacitly expressed it, let himself go. He sometimes came twice in the twenty-four hours; the moments he liked best were those of gathering dusk, of the short autumn twilight; this was the time of which, again and again, he found himself hoping most. Then he could, as seemed to him, most intimately wander and wait, linger and listen, feel his fine attention, never in his life before so fine, on the pulse of the great vague place: he preferred the lampless hour and only wished he might have prolonged, each day, the deep crepuscular magic. Later—rarely much before midnight, but then for a considerable vigil—he watched with his glimmering light; moving slowly, holding it high, playing it far, rejoicing above all, as much as he might, in open vistas, reaches of communication between rooms and along passages; the long, straight chance or show, as he would have called it, for the revelation he pretended to invite. It was a practice he found he could perfectly "work" without exciting remark; no one was in the least the wiser for it; even Alice Staverton, who was moreover a well of discretion, didn't quite fully imagine.

He let himself in and let himself out with the assurance of calm proprietorship; and accident so far favoured him that if a fat Avenue "officer" had happened on occasion to see him entering at eleven-thirty, he had never yet, to the best of his belief, been noticed as emerging at two. He walked there on the crisp November nights, arrived regularly at the evening's end; it was as easy to do this after dining out as to take his way to a club or to his hotel. When he left his club, if he had not been dining out, it was ostensibly to go to his hotel; and when he left his hotel, if he had spent a part of the

evening there, it was ostensibly to go to his club. Everything was easy in fine; everything conspired and promoted: there was truly even in the quality of his experience something that glossed over, something that salved and simplified all the rest of consciousness. He circulated, talked, renewed, loosely and pleasantly, old relations—met indeed, so far as he could, new expectations and seemed to make out on the whole that in spite of the career, of such different contacts, which he had spoken of to Miss Staverton as ministering so little, for those who might have watched it, to edification, he was positively rather liked than not. He was a dim secondary social success—and all with people who had truly not an idea of him. It was all mere surface sound, this murmur of their welcome, this popping of their corks—just as his gestures of response were the extravagant shadows, emphatic in proportion as they meant little, of some game of *ombres chinoises*. He projected himself all day, in thought, straight over the bristling line of hard unconscious heads and into the other, the real, the waiting life; the life that, as soon as he had heard behind him the click of his great house-door, began for him as beguilingly as the slow opening bars of some rich music follows the tap of the conductor's wand.

He always caught the first effect of the steel point of his stick on the old marble of the hall pavement, large black and white squares that he remembered as the admiration of his childhood and that had then made in him, as he now saw, for the growth of an early conception of style. This effect was the thin reverberating tinkle as of some far-off bell hung who should say where?—in the depths of the house, in the past of that mystical other world that might have been for him had he not, for weal or woe, abandoned it. On this impression he did ever the same thing; he put his stick all noiselessly away in a corner—feeling the place once more in the likeness of some great glass bowl, all precious concave crystal, set delicately humming by the play of a moist finger round its edge. The concave crystal held, as it were, this mystical other world, and the indescribably fine murmur of its rim was the sigh there, the scarce audible pathetic wail, to his strained ear, of all the old baffled forsworn possibilities. What he did therefore by this appeal of his hushed presence was to wake them into such measure of ghostly life as they might still enjoy. They were shy, all but unappeasably shy, but they weren't really sinister; at least they weren't as he had hitherto felt them—before they had taken the Form he so yearned to make them take, the Form he at moments saw himself in the light of fairly hunting, on tiptoe, the points of

his evening-shoes, from room to room and from storey to storey.

That was the essence of his vision—which was all rank folly, if one would, while he was out of the house and otherwise occupied, but which took on the last verisimilitude as soon as he was isolated. He knew what he meant and what he wanted; it was as clear as the figure on a cheque presented in demand for cash. His *alter ego* "walked"—that was the note of his image of him, and his image of his motive for his own odd pastime was the desire to waylay him and meet him. He roamed slowly, warily, but all restlessly, he himself did—Mrs. Muldoody had been absolutely right with her figure of their "craping"; and the presence he watched for would roam restlessly too. But it would be as cautious and as shifty; the conviction of its probable, in fact its already quite sensible, quite audible evasion of pursuit grew for him from night to night, laying on him finally a spell to which nothing in his life had been comparable. It had been the theory of many superficially judging persons, he knew, that he was wasting that life in a surrender to sensations; but he had tasted of no pleasure as fine as his actual tension, had been introduced to no sport that demanded at once the patience and the nerve of this stalking of a creature more subtle, yet at bay perhaps more formidable, than any beast of the forest. The terms, the comparisons, the very practices of the chase came again positively into play; there were even moments when passages of his occasional experience as a sportsman, stirred memories, from his younger time, of moor and mountain and desert, revived for him—and to the increase of his keenness—by the tremendous force of analogy. He found himself at moments—once he had placed his single light on some mantelshelf or in some recess—stepping back into shelter or shade, effacing himself behind a door or in an embrasure as he had sought of old the vantage of rock and tree; he found himself holding his breath and living in the joy of the instant, the supreme suspense created by big game alone.

He wasn't afraid (though putting himself the question as he believed gentlemen on Bengal tiger-shoots or in close quarters with the great bear of the Rockies had been known to confess to having put it); and this indeed—since here at least he might be frank!—because of the impression, so intimate and so strange, that he himself produced as yet a dread, produced certainly a strain, beyond the liveliest he was likely to feel. They fell for him into categories, they fairly became familiar, the signs, for his own perception, of the alarm his presence and his vigilance

created ; though leaving him always to remark portentously on his probably having formed a relation, his probably enjoying a consciousness, unique in the experience of man. People enough, first and last, had been in terror of apparitions, but who had ever before so turned the tables and become himself, in the apparitional world, an incalculable terror ? He might have found this sublime had he quite dared to think of it ; but he didn't too much insist, truly, on that side of his privilege. With habit and repetition he gained to an extraordinary degree the power to penetrate the dusk of distances and the darkness of corners, to resolve back into their innocence the treacheries of uncertain light, the evil-looking forms taken in the gloom by mere shadows, by accidents of the air, by shifting effects of perspective ; putting down his dim luminary, he could still wander on without it, pass into other rooms and, only knowing it was there behind him in case of need, see his way about, project visually, for his purpose, a comparative clearness. It made him feel, this acquired faculty, like some monstrous stealthy cat ; he wondered if he would have appeared to have at these moments large shining yellow eyes, and what it mightn't verily be for the poor hard-pressed *alter ego* to be confronted with such a face.

He liked, however, the open shutters ; he opened everywhere those Mrs. Muldoody had closed, closing them as carefully afterwards, so that she shouldn't notice ; he liked—oh this he did like and above all in the upper rooms !—the sense of the hard silver of the autumn stars through the window-panes, and scarcely less the flare of the street-lamps below, the white electric lustre which it would have taken curtains to keep out. This was human, actual, social ; this was of the world he had lived in, and he was more at his ease certainly for the countenance, coldly general and impersonal, that, all the while and in spite of his detachment, it seemed to give him. He had support of course mostly in the rooms at the wide front and the prolonged side ; it failed him considerably in the parts of the back. But if he sometimes, on his rounds, was glad of his optical reach, so none the less often the rear of the house affected him as the very jungle of his prey. The place was there more subdivided, a large " extension," in particular, where small rooms for servants had been multiplied, abounded in nooks and corners, in closets and passages, in the ramifications especially of an ample back-staircase over which he leaned, many a time, to look far down—not deterred from his gravity even while aware that he might for a spectator have figured some solemn simpleton playing at

hide-and-seek. He himself, outside, might in fact make that ironic *rapprochement ;* but within the walls, and in spite of the clear windows, his consistency was proof against the cynical light of New York.

It had been in the nature of that measure of the exasperated consciousness of his victim to become a real test for him ; since he had quite put it to himself from the first that, oh distinctly ! he could "cultivate" his whole perception. He had felt it as above all open to cultivation—which indeed was but another name for his manner of spending his time. He was bringing it on, bringing it to perfection, by practice, the expenditure by which it had grown so fine that he was now aware of impressions, attestations of his general postulate, that couldn't have broken upon him at once. This was the case more specifically with a phenomenon at last quite frequent for him in the upper rooms, the recognition—absolutely unmistakable and by a turn dating from a particular hour, his resumption of his campaign after a diplomatic drop, a calculated absence of three nights—of his being followed at a distance carefully taken and to the express end that he should the less confidently, less arrogantly, appear to himself merely to pursue. It worried, it finally quite broke him up, for it proved, of all the conceivable impressions, the one that least suited his book. He was kept in sight while remaining himself—as regards the essence of his position—sightless, and his only recourse then was in abrupt turns, rapid recoveries of ground. He wheeled about, retracing his steps, as if he might so catch in his face at least the stirred air of some other quick revolution. It was indeed true that his fully dislocalised thought of these manœuvres recalled to him Pantaloon, at the Christmas farce, buffeted and tricked from behind by ubiquitous Harlequin ; but it remained wholly without prejudice to the influence of the conditions themselves, each time he was re-exposed to them, so that in fact this association, had he suffered it to become constant, would on a certain side have but ministered to his intenser gravity. He had made, as I have said, to create on the premises the baseless sense of a reprieve, his three absences ; and the result of the third was to confirm the after-effect of the second.

On his return, that night—the night succeeding his last intermission—he stood in the hall and looked up the staircase with a certainty more intimate than any he had yet known. "He's *there*, at the top, and waiting—not, as in general, falling back for disappearance. He's holding his ground, and it's the first time—which is a proof, isn't it ? that something has happened for him." So Brydon argued with his hand on the

banister and his foot on the lowest stair ; in which position he felt, as never before, the air chilled by his logic. He himself turned cold in it, for he seemed of a sudden to know what now was involved. "Harder pressed ?—yes, he takes it in, with its thus making clear to him that I've come, as they say, 'to stay.' He doesn't like it, at last : in the sense, I mean, that his wrath, his menaced interest, now balances with his dread. I've hunted him till he has 'turned' : that, up there, is what has happened—he's the fanged or the antlered animal brought at last to bay." There came to him, as I say—but determined by an influence beyond my notation !—the acuteness of this certainty ; under which, however, the next moment, he had broken into a sweat that he would as little have consented to attribute to fear as he would have dared immediately to act upon it for a sign of exaltation. It marked none the less a prodigious thrill, a thrill that represented sudden dismay, no doubt, but also represented, and with the selfsame throb, the strangest, the most joyous, possibly the next minute almost the proudest, duplication of consciousness.

"He has been dodging, retreating, hiding, but now, worked up to anger, he'll fight ! "—this intense impression made a single mouthful as it were, of terror and applause. But what was wondrous was that the applause, for the felt fact, was so eager, since if it was his other self he was running to earth this ineffable identity was thus in the last resort not unworthy of him. It bristled there—somewhere near at hand, however unseen still—as the hunted thing, even as the trodden worm of the adage, *must* at last bristle ; and Brydon at this instant tasted probably of a sensation more complex than had ever before found itself consistent with sanity. It was as if it would have shamed him that a character so associated with his own should triumphantly succeed in just skulking, should to the end not dare to face him ; so that the drop of this danger was, on the spot, a great lift of the whole situation. Yet by another rare shift of the same subtlety he was already trying to ascertain how much more he himself might now be in peril of fear ; rejoicing thus that he could, in another form, actively inspire that fear, and simultaneously quaking for the form in which he might passively know it.

The apprehension of knowing it must after a little have grown in him, and the strangest moment of his adventure perhaps, the most memorable or really most interesting, afterwards, of his crisis, was the lapse of a sharp spasm of concentrated conscious *combat*, the sense of a need to hold on to something,

even after the manner of a man slipping and slipping on some awful incline ; the vivid impulse, above all, to move, to act, to charge somehow and upon something—to show himself, in a word, that he wasn't afraid. The state of "holding-on" was thus the state to which he was momentarily reduced ; if there had been anything in the great vacancy to seize he would have been presently aware of having clutched it as, under a shock at home, he might have clutched the nearest chair-back. He had been surprised at any rate—of this he *was* aware—into something unprecedented since his original appropriation of the place ; he had closed his eyes, held them tight for a long minute, as with that instinct of dismay and that terror of vision. When he opened them the room, the other contiguous rooms, extraordinarily, seemed lighter—so light, almost, that at first he thought it was day. He stood firm, however that might be, just where he had paused ; his resistance had helped him—it was as if there were something he had tided over. He knew after a little what this was—it had been in the imminent danger of flight. He had stiffened his will against going, without which he would have made for the stairs ; and it seemed to him that, still with his eyes closed, he would have descended them, would have known how, straight and swiftly to the bottom.

Well, as he had held out here he was—still at the top, among the more intricate upper rooms and with the gauntlet of the others, of all the rest of the house, still to run when it should be his time to go. He would go at his time—only at his time : didn't he go every night at very much the same hour ? He took out his watch—there was light for that : it was scarcely a quarter past one, and he had never retreated so soon. He reached his lodgings for the most part at two—with his walk of a quarter of an hour. He would wait for the last quarter—he wouldn't stir till then ; and he kept his watch there with his eyes on it, reflecting while he held it that this deliberate wait, a wait with an effort which he recognised, would serve perfectly for the attestation he desired to make. It would prove his courage—unless indeed the latter might most be proved by his budging at last from his place. What he mainly felt now was that, since he hadn't originally scuttled, he had his dignities—which had never in his life seemed so many—all to preserve and to carry aloft. This was before him in truth as a physical image, an image almost worthy of an age of greater romance. That remark indeed glimmered for him only to glow the next instant with a finer light ; since what age of romance, after all, could have matched either the state of his mind or, "objectively" as

they said, the wonder of his situation? The only difference would have been that, brandishing his dignities over his head as in a parchment scroll, he might then—that is in the heroic time—have proceeded downstairs with a drawn sword in his other grasp.

At present, really, the light he had set down on the mantel of the next room would have to figure his sword; which utensil, in the course of a minute, he had taken the requisite number of steps to possess himself of. The door between the rooms was open, and from the second another door opened to a third. These rooms, as he remembered, gave all three upon a common corridor as well, but there was a fourth beyond them without issue save through the preceding. To have moved, to have heard his step again, was appreciably a help; though even in recognising this he lingered once more a little by the chimney-piece on which his light had rested. When he next moved, hesitating a little where to turn, he found himself considering a circumstance that, after his first and comparatively vague apprehension of it, produced in him the start that often attends some pang of recollection, the violent shock of having ceased happily to forget. He had come into sight of the door in which the brief chain of communication ended, and which he now looked at from the nearer threshold, the one not directly facing it. Placed at some distance to the left of this point, it would have admitted him to the last room of the four, the room without other approach or egress, had it not, to his intimate conviction, been closed *since* his former visitation, the matter probably of a quarter of an hour before. He stared with all his eyes at the wonder of the fact, arrested again where he stood and again holding his breath while he sounded its sense. Surely it had *been* closed—that is it had been on his previous passage indubitably open!

He took it full in the face that something had happened between—that he couldn't have noticed before (by which he meant on his original tour of all the rooms that evening) that such a barrier had exceptionally presented itself. He had indeed since that moment undergone an agitation so extraordinary that it might have muddled for him any earlier view; and he tried to think that he might perhaps have then gone into the room and inadvertently, automatically, on coming out, have drawn the door after him. The difficulty was that this, exactly, was what he never did; it was against his whole policy as he might have said, the essence of which was to keep vistas clear. He had had them from the first, he was well aware, quite on the

brain : the strange apparition, at the far end of one of them, of his baffled " prey " (which had become by so sharp an irony so little the term now to apply) was the form of success his imagination had most cherished, projecting into it always a refinement of beauty. He had known fifty times the start of perception that had afterwards dropped; had fifty times gasped to himself " There ! " under some fond brief hallucination. The house, as the case stood, admirably lent itself ; he might wonder at the taste, the native architecture of the particular time, which could rejoice so in the multiplication of doors—the opposite extreme to the modern, the actual, almost complete proscription of them ; but it had fairly contributed to provoke this obsession of the presence encountered telescopically, as he might say, focussed and studied in diminishing perspective and as by a rest for the elbow.

It was with these considerations that his present attention was charged—they perfectly availed to make what he saw portentous. He *couldn't* by any lapse have blocked that aperture ; and if he hadn't, if it was unthinkable, why what else was clear but that there had been another agent ? Another agent ?—he had been catching, as he felt a moment back, the very breath of him ; but when had he been so close as in this simple, this logical, this completely personal act ? It was so logical, that is, that one might have *taken* it for personal; yet for what did Brydon take it, he asked himself while, softly panting, he felt his eyes almost leave their sockets. Ah this time at last they *were*, the two, the opposed projections of him, in presence ; and this time, as much as one would, the question of danger loomed. With it rose as not before the question of courage—for what he knew the blank face of the door to say to him was " Show us how much you have ! " It stared, it glared back at him with that challenge ; it put to him the two alternatives : should he just push it open or not ? Oh, to have this consciousness was to *think*—and to think, Brydon knew as he stood there, was, with the lapsing moments, not to have acted ! Not to have acted—that was the misery and the pang—was even still not to act ; was in fact *all* to feel the thing in another, in a new and terrible way. How long did he pause and how long did he debate ? There was presently nothing to measure it ; for his vibration had already changed—as just by the effect of its intensity. Shut up there, at bay, defiant, and with the prodigy of the thing palpably, provably *done* thus giving notice like some stark signboard—under that accession of accent the situation itself had turned ; and Brydon at last remarkably made up his mind on what it had turned to.

It had turned altogether to a different admonition; to a supreme hint for him of the value of Discretion! This slowly dawned, no doubt—for it could take its time; so perfectly, on his threshold, had he been stayed, so little, as yet, had he either advanced or retreated. It was the strangest of all things that now when, by his taking ten steps and applying his hand to a latch, or even his shoulder and his knee, if necessary, to a panel, all the hunger of his prime need might have been met, his high curiosity crowned, his unrest assuaged—it was amazing, but it was also exquisite and rare, that insistence should have, at a touch, quite dropped from him. Discretion—he jumped at that; and yet not, verily, at such a pitch, because it saved his nerves or his skin, but because, much more valuably, it saved the situation. When I say he "jumped" at it I feel the consonance of this term with the fact that—at the end indeed of I know not how long—he did move again, he crossed straight to the door. He wouldn't touch it—it seemed now that he might *if* he would: he would only just wait there a little to show, to prove that he wouldn't. He had thus another station close to the thin partition by which revelation was denied him; but with his eyes bent and his hands held off in a mere intensity of stillness. He listened as if there had been something to hear, but this attitude, while it lasted, was his own communication. "If you won't then—good: I spare you and I give up. You affect me as by the appeal, positively, for pity: you convince me that, for reasons rigid and sublime—what do I know?—we both of us should have suffered. I respect them then, and, though moved and privileged as, I believe, it has never been given to man, I retire, I renounce—and never, on my honour, to try again. So rest for ever—and let *me!*"

That, for Brydon, was the deep sense of this last demonstration—solemn, measured, directed as he felt it to be. He brought it to a close, he turned away; and now verily he knew how deeply he had been stirred. He retraced his steps, taking up his candle, burnt, he observed, well-nigh to the socket, and marking again, lighten it as he would, the distinctness of his footfall; after which he in a moment knew himself at the other side of the house. He did here what he had not yet done at these hours—he opened half a casement, one of those in the front, and let in the air of the night; a thing he would have taken at any time previous for a sharp rupture of his spell. His spell was broken now, and it didn't matter—broken by his concession and his surrender, which made it idle henceforth that he should ever come back. The empty street, with its other life so marked

even by the great lamplit vacancy, was within call, within touch; he stayed there as to be in it again, high above it though he was still perched; he watched as for some comforting common fact, some vulgar human note, the passage of a scavenger or a thief, some night-bird however base. He would have blessed that sign of life; he would have welcomed, positively, the slow approach of his friend the policeman, whom he had hitherto only sought to avoid, and wasn't sure that if the patrol had come into sight he mightn't have felt the impulse to get into relation with it, to hail it on some pretext from his fourth floor.

The pretext that wouldn't have been too silly or too compromising, the explanation that would have saved his dignity and kept his name, in such a case, out of the papers, was not definite to him: he was so occupied with the thought of recording his Discretion—as an effect of the vow he had just uttered to his intimate adversary—that the importance of this loomed large and something had overtaken, all ironically, his sense of proportion. If there had been a ladder applied to the front of the house, even one of the vertiginous perpendiculars employed by painters and roofers and sometimes left standing overnight, he would have managed somehow, astride of the window-sill, to compass by outstretched leg and arm that mode of descent. If there had been some such uncanny thing as he had found in his room at hotels, a workable fire-escape in the form of notched cable or canvas shoot, he would have availed himself of it as a proof—well, of his present delicacy. He nursed that sentiment, as the question stood, a little in vain, and even—at the end of he scarce knew once more how long—found it, as by the action on his mind of the failure of response of the outer world, sinking back to vague anguish. It seemed to him he had waited an age for some stir of the great grim hush; the life of the town was itself under a spell—so unnaturally, up and down the whole prospect of known and rather ugly objects, the blankness and the silence lasted. Had they ever, he asked himself, the hard-faced houses which had begun to look livid in the dim dawn, had they ever spoken so little to any need of his spirit? Great builded voids, great crowded stillnesses put on often, in the heart of cities, for the small hours, a sort of sinister mask, and it was of this large collective negation that Brydon presently became conscious—all the more that the break of day was, almost incredibly, now at hand, proving to him what a night he had made of it.

He looked again at his watch, saw what had become of his time-values (he had taken hours for minutes—not, as in other

tense situations, minutes for hours) and the strange air of the streets was but the weak, the sullen flush of a dawn in which everything was still locked up. His choked appeal from his own open window had been the sole note of life, and he could but break off at last as for a worse despair. Yet while so deeply demoralised he was capable again of an impulse denoting—at least by his present measure—extraordinary resolution; of retracing his steps to the spot where he had turned cold with the extinction of his last pulse of doubt as to there being in the place another presence than his own. This required an effort strong enough to sicken him; but he had his reason, which overmastered for the moment everything else. There was the whole of the rest of the house to traverse, and how should he screw himself to that if the door he had seen closed were at present open? He could hold to the idea that the closing had practically been for him an act of mercy, a chance offered him to descend, depart, get off the ground and never again profane it. This conception held together, it worked; but what it meant for him depended now clearly on the amount of forbearance his recent action, or rather his recent inaction, had engendered. The image of the "presence," whatever it was, waiting there for him to go—this image had not yet been so concrete for his nerves as when he stopped short of the point at which certainty would have come to him. For with all his resolution, or more exactly with all his dread, he did stop short—he hung back from really seeing. The risk was too great and his fear too definite: it took at this moment an awful specific form.

He knew—yes, as he had never known anything—that, *should* he see the door open it would all too abjectly be the end of him. It would mean that the agent of his shame—his shame being the deep abjection—was once more at large and in general possession; and what glared him thus in the face was the act that this would determine for him. It would send him straight about to the window he had left open, and by that window, be the long ladder or the dangling rope as absent as it would, he saw himself uncontrollably, insanely, fatally take his way to the street. The hideous chance of this he at least could avert; but he could only avert it by recoiling in time from assurance. He had the whole house to traverse—this fact was still there; only he now knew that uncertainty alone could start him. He stole back from where he had checked himself—merely to do so was suddenly like safety—and, making blindly for the greater staircase, left gaping rooms and sounding passages behind. Here was the top of the stairs, with a fine large dim

descent and three spacious landings to deal with. His instinct was all for mildness, but his feet were harsh on the floors, and, strangely, when he had in a couple of minutes become aware of this, it counted somehow for help. He couldn't have spoken, the tone of his voice would have scared him and the common conceit or resource of "whistling in the dark" (whether literally or figuratively) have appeared basely vulgar; yet he liked none the less to hear himself go, and when he had reached his first landing—taking it all with no rush, but quite steadily—that stage of success drew from him a gasp of relief.

The house withal seemed immense, the scale of space again inordinate; the open rooms, to no one of which his eyes deflected, gloomed in their shuttered state like mouths of caverns; only the high skylight that formed the crown of the deep well created for him a medium in which he could advance but which might have been, for queerness of colour, some watery underworld. He tried to think of something noble, as that his property was really grand, a splendid possession; but this nobleness took the form too of the clear delight with which he was finally to sacrifice it. They might come in now, the builders, the destroyers—they might come as soon as they would. At the end of two flights he had dropped to another zone, and from the middle of the third, with only one more left, he recognised the influence of the lower windows, of half-drawn blinds, of the occasional gleam of street-lamps, of the glazed spaces of the vestibule. This was the bottom of the sea, which showed an illumination of its own and which he even saw paved—when at a given moment he drew up to sink a long look over the banisters—with the marble squares of his childhood. By that time, indubitably, he felt, as he might have said in a commoner cause, better; it had allowed him to stop and take breath, and the ease increased with the sight of the old black-and-white slabs. But what he most felt was that now surely, with the element of impunity moving him on as by hard firm hands, the case was settled for what he might have seen above had he dared that last look. The closed door, blessedly remote now, was still closed—and he had only in short to reach that of the house.

He came down further, he crossed the passage forming the access to the last flight; and if here again he stopped an instant it was almost for the sharpness of the thrill of assured escape. It made him shut his eyes—which opened again to the straight descent of the remainder of the stairs. Here was impunity still, but impunity almost excessive; inasmuch as the sidelights and the high fan-tracery of the entrance were glimmering straight

into the hall ; an appearance produced, he the next instant saw, by the fact that the vestibule gaped wide, that the hinged halves of the inner door had been thrown far back. Out of that again the *question* sprang at him, making his eyes, as he felt, half start from his head as they had done at the top of the house before the sign of the other door. If he had left that one open hadn't he left this one closed, and wasn't he now in *most* immediate presence of some inconceivable occult activity ? It was as sharp, the question, as a knife in his side, but the answer hung fire still and seemed to lose itself in the vague darkness to which the thin admitted dawn, glimmering archwise over the whole outer door, made a semicircular margin, a cold, silvery nimbus that seemed to play a little as he looked, to shift and expand and contract.

It was as if there had been something within it protected by indistinctness and corresponding in extent with the opaque surface behind, the painted panels of the last barrier to his escape, of which the key was in his pocket. The indistinctness mocked him even while he stared, affected him as somehow shrouding or challenging certitude, so that after faltering an instant on his step he let himself go with the sense that here *was* at last something to meet, to touch, to take, to know—something all unnatural and dreadful, but to advance upon which was the condition for him either of liberation or of supreme defeat. The penumbra, dense and dark, was the virtual screen of a figure which stood in it as still as some image erect in a niche or as some black-vizored sentinel guarding a treasure. Brydon was to know afterwards, was to recall and make out, the particular thing he had believed during the rest of his descent. He saw, in its great grey glimmering margin, the central vagueness diminish, and he felt it to be taking the very form toward which for so many days the passion of his curiosity had yearned. It gloomed, it loomed, it was something, it was somebody, the prodigy of a personal presence.

Rigid and conscious, spectral yet human, a man of his own substance and stature waited there to measure himself with his power to dismay. This only could it be—this only till he recognised, with his advance, that what made the face dim was the pair of raised hands that covered it and in which, so far from being offered in defiance, it was buried as for dark deprecation. So Brydon, before him, took him in ; with every fact of him now, in the higher light, hard and acute—his planted stillness, his vivid truth, his grizzled bent head and white masking hands, his queer actuality of evening-dress, of dangling double eyeglass,

of gleaming silk lappet and white linen, of pearl button and gold watchguard and polished shoe. No portrait by a great modern master could have presented him with more intensity, thrust him out of his frame with more art, as if there had been "treatment," of the consummate sort, in his every shade and salience. The revulsion, for our friend, had become, before he knew it, immense—this drop, in the act of apprehension, to the sense of his adversary's inscrutable manœuvre. That meaning at least, while he gaped, it offered him; for he could but gape at his other self in this other anguish, gape as a proof that *he*, standing there for the achieved, the enjoyed, the triumphant life, couldn't be faced in his triumph. Wasn't the proof in the splendid covering hands, strong and completely spread?—so spread and so intentional that, in spite of a special verity that surpassed every other, the fact that one of these hands had lost two fingers, which were reduced to stumps, as if accidentally shot away, the face was effectually guarded and saved.

"Saved," though, *would* it be?—Brydon breathed his wonder till the very impunity of his attitude and the very insistence of his eyes produced, as he felt, a sudden stir which showed, the next instant, for a deeper portent, while the head raised itself, the betrayal of a braver purpose. The hands, as he looked, began to move, to open; then, as if deciding in a flash, dropped from the face and left it uncovered and presented. Horror, with the sight, had leaped into Brydon's throat, gasping there in a sound he couldn't utter; for the bared identity was too hideous as *his*, and his glare was the passion of his protest. The face, *that* face, Spencer Brydon's?—he searched it still, but looking away from it in dismay and denial, falling straight from his height of sublimity. It was unknown, inconceivable, awful, disconnected from any possibility——! He had been "sold," he inwardly moaned, stalking such game as this: the presence before him was a presence, the horror within him was a horror, but the waste of his nights had been only grotesque and the success of his adventure an irony. Such an identity fitted his at *no* point, made its alternative monstrous. A thousand times yes, as it came upon him nearer now—the face was the face of a stranger. It came upon him nearer now, quite as one of those expanding fantastic images projected by the magic-lantern of childhood; for the stranger, whoever he might be, evil, odious, blatant. vulgar, had advanced as for aggression, and he knew himself give ground. Then harder pressed still, sick with the force of his shock and falling back as under the hot breath and the roused passion of a life larger than his own, a rage of per-

sonality before which his own collapsed, he felt the whole vision turn to darkness and his very feet give way. His head went round ; he was going ; he had gone.

III

What had next brought him back, clearly—though after how long ?—was Mrs. Muldoody's voice, coming to him from quite near, from so near that he seemed presently to see her as kneeling on the ground before him while he lay looking up at her ; himself not wholly on the ground, but half raised and upheld—conscious, yes, of tenderness of support and more particularly of a head pillowed in extraordinary softness and faintly refreshing fragrance. He considered, he wondered, his wit but half at his service ; then another face intervened, bending more directly over him, and he finally knew that Alice Staverton had made her lap an ample and perfect cushion to him, and that she had to this end seated herself on the lowest degree of the staircase, the rest of his long person remaining stretched on his old black and white slabs. They were cold, these marble squares of his youth ; but *he* somehow was not, in this rich return of consciousness—the most wonderful hour, little by little, that he had ever known, leaving him, as it did, so gratefully, so abysmally passive, and yet as with a treasure of intelligence waiting, all round him, for quiet appropriation ; dissolved, he might call it, in the air of the place and producing the golden glow of a late autumn afternoon. He had come back, yes—come back from further away than any man but himself had ever travelled ; yet it was strange how, with this sense, what he had come back *to* seemed really the great thing, and as if his prodigious journey had been all for the sake of it. Slowly and surely his consciousness grew, his vision of his state thus completing itself : he had been miraculously *carried* back—lifted and carefully borne as from where he had been picked up, the uttermost end of an interminable grey passage. Even with this he had been suffered to rest, and what had now brought him to knowledge was the break in the long, mild motion.

It had brought him to knowledge, to knowledge—yes, this was the beauty of his state ; which came to resemble more and more that of a man who, going to sleep on some news of a great inheritance, has then, after dreaming it away, after profaning it with matters strange to it, waked up again to full serenity of certitude and has only to lie and see it shine. This was the

drift of his patience—that he had only to let it shine steadily. He must moreover, with intermissions, still have been lifted and borne; since why and how else should he have known himself, later on, with the afternoon glow intenser, no longer at the foot of his stairs—situated as these now seemed at that dark other end of his tunnel—but on a deep window-bench of his high saloon, over which had been spread, couch-fashion, a mantle of soft stuff lined with grey fur that was familiar to his eyes and that one of his hands kept fondly feeling as if for its pledge of truth. Mrs. Muldoody's face had gone, but the other, the second he had recognised, hung over him in a way that showed how he was still propped and pillowed. He took it all in, and the more he took it the more it seemed to suffice: he was as much at peace as if he had had food and drink. It was the two women who had found him, on Mrs. Muldoody's having plied, at her usual hour, her latch-key—and on her having above all arrived while Miss Staverton still lingered near the house. She had been turning away, all anxiety, from worrying the vain bell-handle—her calculation having been of the hour of the good woman's visit; but the latter, blessedly, had come up in time not to miss her, and they had entered together. He had then lain, beyond the vestibule, very much as he was lying now—quite, that is, as he appeared to have fallen, but all so wondrously without bruise or gash; only in a depth of stupor. What he most took in, however, at present, with the steadier clearance, was that Alice Staverton had, for a long unspeakable moment, not doubted he was dead.

"It must have been that I *was*." He made it out as she held him. "Yes—I can only have died. You brought me literally to life. Only," he wondered, his eyes rising to her, "only, in the name of all the benedictions, how?"

It took her but an instant to bend her face and kiss him, and something in the manner of it, and in the way her hands clasped and locked his head while he felt the cool charity and virtue of her lips, something in all this beatitude somehow answered everything. "And now I keep you," she said.

"Oh keep me, keep me!" he pleaded while her face still hung over him; in response to which it dropped again and stayed close, clingingly close. It was the seal of their situation—of which he tasted the impress for a long blissful moment in silence. But he came back. "Yet how did you know—— ?"

"I was uneasy. You were to have come, you remember—and you had sent no word."

"Yes, I remember—I was to have gone to you at one

to-day." It caught on to their "old" life and relation—which were so near and so far. "I was still out there in my strange darkness—where was it, what was it? I must have stayed there so long." He could but wonder at the depth and the duration of his swoon.

"Since last night?" she asked with a shade of fear for her possible indiscretion.

"Since this morning—it must have been: the cold dim dawn of to-day. Where have I been," he vaguely wailed, "where have I been?" He felt her hold him close, and it was as if this helped him now to make in all security his mild moan. "What a long dark day!"

All in her tenderness she had waited a moment. "In the cold dim dawn?" she quavered.

But he had already gone on, piecing together the parts of the whole prodigy. "As I didn't turn up, you came straight——?"

She barely hesitated. "I went first to your hotel—where they told me of your absence. You had dined out last evening and had not been back since. But they appeared to know you had been at your club."

"So you had the idea of *this*——?"

"Of what?" she asked in a moment.

"Well—of what has happened."

"I believed at least you'd have been here. I've known, all along," she said, "that you've been coming."

"'Known' it——?"

"Well, I've believed it. I said nothing to you after that talk we had a month ago—but I felt sure. I knew you *would*," she declared.

"That I would persist, you mean?"

"That you'd see him."

"Ah, but I didn't!" cried Brydon with his long wail. "There's somebody—an awful beast; whom I brought, too horribly, to bay. But it's not me."

At this she bent over him again, and her eyes were in his eyes. "No—it's not you." And it was as if, while her face hovered, he might have made out in it, had it not been so near, some particular meaning blurred by a smile. "No, thank heaven," she repeated—"it's not you! Of course it wasn't to have been."

"Ah, but it *was*," he gently insisted. And he stared before him now as he had been staring for so many weeks. "I was to have known myself."

"You couldn't!" she returned consolingly. And then

reverting, and as if to account further for what she had herself done, "But it wasn't only *that*, that you hadn't been at home," she went on. "I waited till the hour at which we had found Mrs. Muldoody that day of your bringing me; and she arrived, as I've told you, while, failing to bring any one to the door, I waited, in my despair, on the steps. After a little, if she hadn't come by such a mercy, I should have found means to hunt her up. But it wasn't," said Alice Staverton, as if once more with her fine intention—"it wasn't only that."

His eyes, as he lay, turned back to her. "What more then?"

She met it, the wonder she had stirred. "In the cold dim dawn, you say? Well, in the cold dim dawn of this morning I too saw you."

"Saw *me*——?"

"Saw *him*," said Alice Staverton. "It must have been at the same moment."

He lay an instant taking it in—as if he wished to be quite reasonable. "At the same moment?"

"Yes—in my dream again, the same one I've named to you. He came back to me. Then I knew it for a sign. He had come to you."

At this Brydon raised himself; he had to see her better. She helped him when she understood his movement, and he sat up, steadying himself beside her there on the window-bench and with his right hand grasping her left. "He didn't come to me."

"You came to yourself," she beautifully smiled.

"Ah, I've come to myself now—thanks to you, dearest. But this brute, with his awful face—this brute's a black stranger. He's none of *me*, even as I *might* have been," Brydon sturdily contended.

But she kept her clearness. "Isn't the whole point that you'd have been different?"

He almost scowled for it. "As different as *that*——?"

Her lucid look seemed to bathe him. "Haven't you exactly wanted to know *how* different? So this morning," she said, "you appeared to me."

"Like *him?*"

"A black stranger!"

"Then how did you know it was I?"

"Because, as I told you weeks ago, my mind, my imagination, had worked so over what you might, what you mightn't have been—to show you, you see, how I've thought of you. In

the midst of that you came to me—that my wonder might be answered. So I knew," she went on; "and believed that, since the question held you too so fast, as you told me that day, you too would see for yourself. And when this morning I again saw I knew it would be because you had—and also then, from the first moment, because you somehow wanted me. *He* seemed to tell me of that. So why," she strangely smiled, "shouldn't I like him?"

It brought Spencer Brydon to his feet. "You 'like' that horror——?"

"I *could* have liked him. And to me," she said, "he was no horror. I had accepted him."

"'Accepted'——?" Brydon oddly sounded.

"Before, for the interest of his difference—yes. And as I didn't disown him, as *I* knew him—which you at last, confronted with him in his difference, so cruelly didn't, my dear—well, he must have been, you see, less dreadful to me. And it may have pleased him that I pitied him."

She was beside him on her feet, but still holding his hand—still with her arm supporting him. Yet though it all brought for him thus a dim light, "You 'pitied' him?" he grudgingly, resentfully asked.

"He has been unhappy, he has been ravaged," she said.

"And haven't I been unhappy? Am not I—you've only to look at me!—ravaged?"

"Ah I don't say I like him *better*," she granted after a thought. "But he's grim, he's worn—and things have happened to him. He doesn't make shift, for sight, with your charming monocle."

"No"—it struck Brydon: "I couldn't have sported mine 'down town.' They'd have guyed me there."

"His great convex pince-nez—I saw it, I recognised the kind—is for his poor ruined sight. And his poor right hand——!"

"Aie!" Brydon winced—whether for his proved identity or for his lost fingers. Then "He has a million a year," he lucidly added. "But he hasn't you."

"And he isn't—no, he isn't—*you!*" she murmured as he drew her to his breast.

Some Reminiscences

By Joseph Conrad

I

Books may be written in all sorts of places. Verbal inspiration may enter the berth of a mariner on board a ship frozen fast in a river in the middle of a town; and since saints are supposed to look benignantly on humble believers, I indulge in the pleasant fancy that the shade of old Flaubert—who fancied himself to be (amongst other things) a descendant of Vikings—might have hovered with amused interest over the decks of a 3000-ton steamer called the *Adowa*, on board of which, gripped by the inclement winter alongside a quay in Rouen, the tenth chapter of "Almayer's Folly" was begun. With interest, I say, for was not the kind Norman giant with enormous moustaches and a thundering voice the last of the Romantics? Was he not, in his unworldly, almost ascetic, devotion to his art a sort of literary, saint-like hermit?

"'*It has set at last,' said Nina to her mother, pointing to the hills behind which the sun had sunk.*" . . . These words of Almayer's romantic daughter I remember tracing on the grey paper of a pad which rested on the blanket of my bed-place. They referred to a sunset in Malayan Isles and shaped themselves in my mind, surrounded by a hallucinated vision of forests and rivers and seas, far removed from a commercial and yet romantic town of the northern hemisphere. But at that moment the mood of visions and words was cut short by the third officer, a cheerful and casual youth, coming in with a bang of the door and the exclamation: "You've made it jolly warm in here."

It was warm. I had turned on the steam-heater after placing a tin under the leaky water-cock—for perhaps you do not know that water will leak where steam will not. I am not aware of what my young friend had been doing on deck all that morning, but the hands he rubbed together vigorously were very red and imparted to me a chilly feeling by their mere aspect. He has

remained the only banjoist of my acquaintance, and being also a younger son of a retired colonel the poem of Mr. Kipling, by a strange aberration of associated ideas, always seems to me to have been written with an exclusive view to his person. When he did not play the banjo he loved to sit and look at it. He proceeded to this sentimental inspection and after meditating a while over the strings under my silent scrutiny inquired airily:

"What are you always scribbling there, if it's fair to ask?"

It was a fair enough question, but I did not answer him, and simply turned the pad over with a movement of instinctive secrecy: I could not have told him he had put to flight the psychology of Nina Almayer, her opening speech of the tenth chapter and the words of Mrs. Almayer's wisdom which were to follow in the ominous oncoming of a tropical night. I could not have told him that Nina had said: "It has set at last." He would have been extremely surprised and perhaps have dropped his precious banjo. Neither could I have told him that the sun of my sea-going was setting too, even as I wrote the words expressing the impatience of passionate youth bent on its desire. I did not know this myself, and it is safe to say he would not have cared, though he was an excellent young fellow and treated me with more deference than, in our relative positions of second and third officer of a steamer, I was strictly entitled to.

He lowered a tender gaze on his banjo and I went on looking through the port-hole. The round opening framed in its brass rim a fragment of the quays, with a row of casks ranged on the frozen ground and the tail-end of a great cart. A red-nosed carter in a blouse and a woollen night-cap leaned against the wheel. An idle, strolling custom-house guard, belted over his blue *capote*, had the air of being depressed by exposure to the weather and the monotony of official existence. A back-ground of grimy houses found a place in the picture framed by my port-hole, across a wide stretch of paved quay brown with frozen mud. Their colouring was sombre, and the most conspicuous feature was a little *café* with curtained windows and a shabby front of white woodwork, corresponding with the squalor of these poorer quarters bordering the river. We had been shifted down there from another berth in the neighbour-hood of the Opera House, where that same port-hole gave me a view of quite another sort of *café*—the best in the town, I believe, and the very one where the worthy Bovary and his wife, the romantic daughter of old Père Renault, had some refreshment after the memorable performance of an opera

which, from descriptive evidence, I conclude must have been the tragic story of Lucia di Lammermoor in its setting of light music.

I could no more recall the hallucination of the Eastern Archipelago which I certainly hoped to see again. The story of "Almayer's Folly" got put away under the pillow for that day. I do not know that I had any occupation to keep me away from it; the truth of the matter is that on board that ship we were leading just then a contemplative life. I will not say anything of my privileged position. I was there "just to oblige," as an actor of standing may take a small part in the benefit performance of a friend.

As far as my feelings were concerned I did not wish to be in that steamer at that time and in those circumstances. And perhaps I was not even wanted there in the usual sense in which a ship "wants" an officer. It was the first and last instance in my sea life when I served ship-owners who have remained completely shadowy to my apprehension. I do not mean this for the well-known firm of London ship-brokers which had chartered the ship to the, I will not say, short-lived, but ephemeral Franco-Canadian Transport Company. A death leaves something behind, but there was never anything tangible left from the F.C.T.C. It flourished no longer than roses live, and unlike the roses it blossomed in the dead of winter, emitted a sort of faint perfume of adventure and died before spring set in. But indubitably it was a company, it had even a house-flag, all white with the letters F.C.T.C. artfully tangled up in a complicated monogram. We flew it at our main-mast head, and now I have come to the conclusion that it was the only flag of its kind in existence. All the same we on board, for many days, had the impression of being a unit of a large fleet with fortnightly departures for Montreal and Quebec as advertised in pamphlets and prospectuses which came aboard in a large package in Victoria Dock, London, just before we started for Rouen, France. And in the shadowy life of the F.C.T.C. lies the secret of that, my last employment in my calling, which in a remote sense interrupted the rhythmical development of Nina Almayer's story.

The then secretary of the London Shipmasters' Society, with its modest rooms in Fenchurch Street, was a man of indefatigable activity and the greatest devotion to his task. He is responsible for what was my last association with a ship. I call it that because it can hardly be called a sea-going experience. Dear Captain Froud—it is impossible not to pay him the

tribute of affectionate familiarity at this distance of years—had very sound views as to the advancement of knowledge and status for the whole body of the officers of the mercantile marine. He organised for us courses of professional lectures, St. John ambulance classes, corresponded industriously with public bodies and members of Parliament on subjects touching the interests of the service ; and as to the oncoming of some inquiry or commission relating to matters of the sea and to the work of seamen, it was a perfect Godsend to his need of exerting himself on our corporate behalf. Together with this high sense of his official duties he had in him a vein of personal kindness, a strong disposition to do what good he could to the individual members of that craft of which in his time he had been a very excellent master. And what greater kindness can one do to a seaman than to put him in the way of employment? Captain Froud did not see why the Shipmasters' Society, besides its general guardianship of our interests, should not be unofficially an employment agency of the very highest class.

"I am trying to persuade all our great ship-owning firms to come to us for their men. There is nothing of a trade-union spirit about our society, and I really don't see why they should not," he said once to me. "I am always telling the captains, too, that all things being equal they ought to give preference to the members of the society. In my position I can generally find for them what they want amongst our members or our associate members."

In my wanderings about London from West to East and back again (I was very idle then) the two little rooms in Fenchurch Street were a sort of resting-place where my spirit, hankering after the sea, could feel itself nearer to the ships, the men, and the life of its choice—nearer there than on any other spot of the solid earth. This resting-place used to be, at about five o'clock in the afternoon, full of men and tobacco smoke, but Captain Froud had the smaller room to himself and there he granted private interviews, whose principal motive was to render service. Thus, one murky November afternoon he beckoned me in with a crooked finger and that peculiar glance above his spectacles which is perhaps my strongest physical recollection of the man.

"I have had in here a shipmaster, this morning," he said, getting back to his desk and pointing a chair to me, "who is in want of an officer. It's for a steamer. You know, nothing pleases me more than to be asked, but unfortunately I do not quite see my way . . ."

As the outer room was full of men I cast a wondering glance at the closed door but he shook his head

"Oh, yes, I should be only too glad to get that berth for one of them. But the fact of the matter is, the captain of that steamer wants an officer who can speak French fluently, and that's not so easy to find. I do not know anybody myself but you. It's a second officer's berth and, of course, you would not care perhaps . . . would you now? I know that it isn't what you are looking for."

I was not. I had given myself up to the idleness of a haunted man who looks for nothing but words wherein to capture his visions. But I admit that outwardly I resembled sufficiently a man who would make a second officer for a steamer chartered by a French company. I showed no signs of being haunted by the fate of Nina and by the murmurs of tropical forests; and even my intimate intercourse with Almayer (a person of weak character) had not put a visible mark upon my features. For many years he and the world of his story had been the companions of my imagination without, I hope, impairing my ability to deal with the realities of sea life. I had had the man and his surroundings with me ever since my return from the eastern waters, some four years before the day of which I speak.

It was in the front sitting-room of furnished apartments in a Pimlico square that they first began to live again with a vividness and poignancy quite foreign to our former real intercourse. I had been treating myself to a long stay on shore, and in the necessity of occupying my mornings, Almayer (that old acquaintance) came nobly to the rescue. Before long, as was only proper, his wife and daughter joined him round my table and then the rest of that Pantai band came full of words and gestures. Unknown to my respectable landlady, it was my practice directly after my breakfast to hold animated receptions of Malays, Arabs and half-castes. They did not clamour aloud for my attention. They came with a silent and irresistible appeal—and the appeal, I affirm here, was not to my self-love or my vanity. It seems now to have had a moral character, for why should the memory of these beings, seen in their obscure sun-bathed existence, demand to express itself in the shape of a novel, except on the ground of that mysterious fellowship which unites in a community of hopes and fears all the dwellers on this earth?

I did not receive my visitors with boisterous rapture as the bearers of any gifts of profit or fame. There was no vision of a printed book before me as I sat writing at that table, situated

in a decayed part of Belgravia. After all these years, each leaving its evidence of laboriously blackened pages, I can honestly say that it is a sentiment akin to piety which prompted me to render in words assembled with conscientious care the memory of things far distant and of men who had lived.

But, coming back to Captain Froud and his fixed idea of never disappointing shipowners or ship-captains, it was not likely that I should fail him in his ambition—to satisfy at a few hours' notice the unusual demand for a French-speaking officer. He explained to me that the ship was chartered by a French company intending to establish a regular monthly line of sailings from Rouen, for the transport of French emigrants to Canada. But, frankly, this sort of thing did not interest me very much. I said gravely that if it were really a matter of keeping up the reputation of the Shipmasters' Society, I would consider it. But the consideration was just for form's sake. The next day I interviewed the Captain, and I believe we were impressed favourably with each other. He explained that his chief mate, Mr. Paramor, was an excellent man in every respect and that he could not think of dismissing him so as to give me the higher position; but that if I consented to come as second officer I would be given certain special advantages—and so on.

I told him that if I came at all the rank really did not matter.

"I am sure," he insisted, "you will get on first rate with Mr. Paramor."

promised faithfully to stay for two trips at least, and it was in those circumstances that what was to be my last connection with a ship began. And after all there was not even one single trip. It may be that it was simply the fulfilment of a fate, of that written word on my forehead which apparently forbade me, through all my sea wanderings, ever to achieve the crossing of the Western Ocean—using the words in that special sense in which sailors speak of Western Ocean trade, of Western Ocean packets, of Western Ocean hard cases. These words seem strictly to apply to the traffic between English and Channel ports and the U.S. seaboard to the north of Savannah. The new life attended closely upon the old and the nine chapters of "Almayer's Folly" went with me to the Victoria Dock, whence in a few days we started for Rouen. I won't go so far as saying that the engaging of a man fated never to cross the Western Ocean was the absolute cause of the Franco-Canadian

Transport Company's failure to achieve even a single passage. It might have been that, of course; but the obvious, gross obstacle was clearly the want of money. Four hundred and sixty bunks for emigrants were put together in the 'tween decks by industrious carpenters while we lay in the Victoria Dock, but never an emigrant turned up in Rouen—of which, being a humane person, I confess I was glad. Some gentlemen from Paris—I think there were three of them, and one was said to be the Chairman—turned up indeed and went from end to end of the ship, knocking their silk hats cruelly against the beams. I attended them personally, and I can vouch for it that the interest they took in things was intelligent enough, though, obviously, they had never seen anything of the sort before. Their faces as they went ashore wore a cheerfully inconclusive expression. Notwithstanding that this inspecting ceremony was supposed to be a preliminary to immediate sailing, it was then, as they filed, bowed to by me, down our gangway, that I received the inward monition that no sailing within the meaning of our charter-party would ever take place.

It must be said that in less than three weeks a move took place. When we first arrived we had been taken up with much ceremony well towards the centre of the town, and, all the street corners being placarded with the tricolour posters announcing the birth of our company, the *petit bourgeois* with his wife and family made a Sunday holiday from the inspection of the ship. I was always in evidence in my best uniform to give information as though I had been a Cook's tourists' interpreter, while our quarter-masters reaped a harvest of small change from personally conducted parties. But when the move was made—that move which carried us some mile and a half down the stream to be tied up to an altogether muddier and shabbier quay—then indeed the desolation of solitude became our lot. It was a complete and soundless stagnation for, as we had the ship ready for sea to the smallest detail, as the frost was hard and the days short, we were absolutely idle—idle to the point of blushing with shame when the thought struck us that all the time our salaries went on. Young Cole was aggrieved because, as he said, we could not enjoy any sort of fun in the evening after loafing like this all day: even the banjo lost its charm since there was nothing to prevent his strumming on it all the time between the meals. The good Paramor—he was really a most excellent fellow—became unhappy as far as was possible to his cheery nature, till one dreary day I suggested, out of sheer mischief, that he should employ the dormant energies

of the crew in hauling both cables up on deck and turning them end for end.

For a moment Mr. Paramor was radiant. "Excellent idea!" but directly his face fell. "Why . . . Yes! But we can't make that job last more than three days," he muttered discontentedly. I don't know how long he expected us to be stuck on the river-side outskirts of Rouen, but I know that the cables got hauled up and turned end for end according to my satanic suggestion, put down again, and their very existence utterly forgotten, I believe, before a French river pilot came on board to take our ship down, empty as she came, into the Havre roads. You may think that this state of forced idleness favoured some advance in the fortunes of Almayer and his daughter. Yet it was not so. As if it were some sort of evil spell, my banjoist cabin-mate's interruption, as related above, had arrested them short at the point of that fateful sunset for many weeks together. It was always thus with this book, begun in '89 and finished in '94—with that shortest of all the novels which it was to be my lot to write. Between its opening exclamation calling Almayer to his dinner in his wife's voice and Abdullah's (his enemy) mental reference to the God of Islam —"The Merciful, the Compassionate"—which closes the book, there were to come several long sea passages, a visit (to use the elevated phraseology suitable to the occasion) to the scenes (some of them) of my childhood and the realisation of childhood's vain words, expressing a light-hearted and romantic whim.

It was in 1868, when ten years old or thereabouts, that while looking at a map of Africa of the time and putting my finger on the blank space then representing the unsolved mystery of that continent, I said to myself with absolute assurance and an amazing audacity which are no longer in my character now:

"When I grow up I will go *there*."

And of course I thought no more about it till after a quarter of a century or so an opportunity offered to go there—as if the sin of childish audacity were to be visited on my mature head. Yes. I did go there: *there* being the region of Stanley Falls which in '68 was the blankest of blank spaces on the earth's figured surface. And the MS. of "Almayer's Folly," carried about me as it were a talisman or a treasure, went *there* too. That it ever came out of *there* seems a special dispensation of Providence; because a good many of my other properties, infinitely more valuable and useful to me, remained behind through unfortunate accidents of transportation. I call to

mind, for instance, a specially awkward turn of the Congo between Kinchassa and Leopoldsville—more particularly when one had to take it at night in a big canoe with only half the proper number of paddlers. I failed in being the second white man on record drowned at that interesting spot through the upsetting of a canoe. The first was a young Belgian officer, but the accident happened some months before my time, and he, too, I believe, was going home; not perhaps quite so ill as myself—but still he was going home. I got round the turn more or less alive, though I was too sick to care whether I did or not, and, always with "Almayer's Folly" amongst my diminishing baggage, I arrived at that delectable capital Boma, where before the departure of the steamer that was to take me home I had the time to wish myself dead over and over again with perfect sincerity. At that date there were in existence only seven chapters of "Almayer's Folly," but the chapter in my history which followed was that of a long, long illness and very dismal convalescence. Geneva, or more precisely the hydropathic establishment of Champel, is rendered for ever famous by the termination of the eighth chapter in the history of Almayer's decline and fall. The events of the ninth are inextricably mixed up with the details of the proper management of a water-side warehouse owned by a certain city firm whose name does not matter. But that work, undertaken to accustom myself again to the activities of a healthy existence, soon came to an end. The earth had nothing to hold me with for very long. And then that memorable story, as if it were a cask of choice madeira, got carried for three years to and fro upon the sea. Whether this treatment improved its flavour or not, of course I would not like to say. As far as appearance is concerned it certainly did nothing of the kind. The whole MS. acquired a faded look and an ancient, yellowish complexion. It became at last unreasonable to suppose that anything in the world would ever happen to Almayer and Nina. And yet something most unlikely to happen on the high seas was to wake them up from their state of suspended animation.

What is it that Novalis says: "It is certain my conviction gains infinitely the moment another soul will believe in it," and what is a novel if not a conviction of our fellow men's existence, strong enough to take upon itself a form of imagined life clearer than reality and whose accumulated verisimilitude of selected episodes puts to shame the pride of documentary history. Providence which saved my MS. from the Congo rapids brought it to the knowledge of a helpful soul far

out on the open sea. It would be on my part the greatest ingratitude ever to forget the sallow, sunken face and the deep-set, dark eyes of the young Cambridge man (he was a "passenger for his health" on board the good ship *Torrens* outward bound to Australia) who was the first reader of "Almayer's Folly"—the very first reader I ever had. "Would it bore you very much reading a MS. in a handwriting like mine?" I had asked him one evening on a sudden impulse at the end of a longish conversation, whose subject was the famous chapter xiii. of Gibbon's History. Jacques (that was his name) was sitting in my cabin one stormy dog-watch below, after bringing me a book to read from his own travelling store.

"Not at all," he answered with his courteous intonation and a faint smile. As I pulled a drawer open, his suddenly aroused curiosity gave him a watchful expression. I wonder what he expected to see. A poem, may be. All that's beyond guessing now. He was not a cold but a calm man, still more subdued by disease—a man of few words and of an unassuming modesty in general intercourse, but with something uncommon in the whole of his person which set him apart from the undistinguished lot of our sixty passengers. His eyes had a thoughtful, introspective look. In his attractive, reserved manner, and in a veiled, sympathetic voice, he asked:

"What is this?" "It is a sort of tale," I answered with an effort. "It is not even finished yet. Nevertheless I would like to know what you think of it." He put the MS. in the breast-pocket of his jacket; I remember perfectly his thin, brown fingers folding it lengthwise. "I will read it to-morrow," he remarked seizing the door-handle, and then, watching the roll of the ship for a propitious moment, he opened the door and was gone. In the moment of his exit I heard the sustained booming of the wind, the swish of the water on the decks of the *Torrens*, and the subdued, as if distant, roar of the rising sea. I noted the growing disquiet in the great restlessness of the ocean, and responded professionally to it with the thought that at eight o'clock, in another half-hour or so at the farthest, the top-gallant sails would have to come off the ship.

Next day, but this time in the first dog-watch, Jacques entered my cabin. He had a thick, woollen muffler round his throat and the MS. was in his hand. He tendered it to me with a steady look but without a word. I took it in silence and he sat down on the couch and still said nothing. I opened and shut a drawer under my desk, on which a filled-up log-slate lay wide

open in its wooden frame waiting to be copied neatly into the sort of book I was accustomed to write with care, the ship's log-book. I turned my back squarely on the desk. And even then Jacques never offered a word. "Well, what do you say?" I asked at last. "Is it worth finishing?" This question expressed exactly the whole of my thoughts.

"Distinctly," he answered in a sedate, slightly veiled voice and then coughed a little.

"Were you interested?" I inquired further almost in a whisper.

"Very much!"

In a pause I went on meeting instinctively the heavy rolling of the ship, and Jacques put his feet on the couch. The curtain of my bed-place swung to and fro as it were a punkah, the bulk-head lamp circled in its gimbals, and now and then the cabin door rattled slightly in the gusts of wind. It was in latitude 40 south, and nearly in the longitude of Greenwich, as far as I can remember, that these quiet rites of Almayer's and Nina's resurrection were taking place. In the prolonged silence it occurred to me that there was a good deal of retrospective writing in the story as far as it went. Was it intelligible in its action, I asked myself, as if already the story-teller were being born into the body of a seaman. But I heard on deck the whistle of the officer of the watch and remained on the alert to catch the order that was to follow this call to attention. It reached me as a faint, fierce shout to "Square the yards." "Aha!" I thought to myself, "a westerly blow coming on." Then I turned to my very first reader who, alas, was not to live long enough to know the end of the tale.

"Now let me ask you one more thing: is the story perfectly clear to you as it stands?"

He raised his dark, gentle eyes to my face and seemed surprised.

"Yes! Perfectly."

This was all I was to hear from his lips concerning the merits of "Almayer's Folly." We never spoke together of the book again. A long period of bad weather set in and I had no thoughts left but for my duties, whilst poor Jacques caught a fatal cold and had to keep close in his cabin. When we arrived in Adelaide the first reader of my prose went at once up-country, and died rather suddenly in the end either in Australia or it may be on the passage while going home through the Suez Canal. I am not sure which it was now, and I do not think I ever heard precisely; though I made inquiries about him from some of our

return passengers who, wandering about to "see the country" during the ship's stay in port, had come upon him here and there. At last we sailed, homeward bound, and still not one line was added to the careless scrawl of the many pages which poor Jacques had had the patience to read with the very shadows of Eternity gathering already in the hollows of his kind, steadfast eyes.

The purpose instilled into me by his simple and final "Distinctly" remained dormant, yet alive to await its opportunity. I daresay I am compelled, unconsciously compelled, now to write volume after volume, as in past years I had been compelled to go to sea voyage after voyage. Leaves must follow upon each other as leagues used to follow in the days gone by, on and on to the appointed end, which, being Truth itself, is One—one for all men and for all occupations.

I do not know which of the two impulses has appeared more mysterious and more wonderful to me. Still, in writing, as in going to sea, I had to wait my opportunity. Let me confess here that I was never one of those wonderful fellows that would go afloat in a wash-tub for the sake of the fun, and if I may pride myself upon my consistency, it was ever just the same with my writing. Some men, I have heard, write in railway carriages, and could do it, perhaps, sitting cross-legged on a clothes-line; but I must confess that my sybaritic disposition will not consent to write without something at least resembling a chair. Line by line, rather than page by page, was the growth of "Almayer's Folly."

And so it happened that I very nearly lost the MS., advanced now to the first words of the ninth chapter, in the Friedrichstrasse railway station (that's in Berlin, you know), on my way to Poland, or more precisely to Ukraine. On an early, sleepy morning changing trains in a hurry I left my Gladstone bag in a refreshment room. A worthy and intelligent *Kofferträger* rescued it. Yet in my anxiety I was not thinking of the MS. but of all the other things that were packed in the bag.

In Warsaw, where I spent two days, those wandering pages were never exposed to the light, except to the candle-light, while the bag lay open on a chair. I was dressing hurriedly to dine at a sporting club. A friend of my childhood (he had been in the Diplomatic Service, but had turned to growing wheat on paternal acres, and we had not seen each other for over twenty years) was sitting on the hotel sofa waiting to carry me off there.

"You might tell me something of your life while you are dressing," he suggested kindly.

I do not think I told him much of my life-story either then or later. The talk of the select little party with which he made me dine was extremely animated and embraced most subjects under heaven, from big-game shooting in Africa to the last poem published in a very modernist review, edited by the very young and patronised by the highest society. But it never touched upon "Almayer's Folly," and next morning, in uninterrupted obscurity, this inseparable companion went on rolling with me in the south-east direction towards the Government of Kiev.

At that time there was an eight-hours' drive, if not more, from the railway station to the country house which was my destination.

"Dear boy" (these words were always written in English), so ran the last letter received in London,—"Get yourself driven to the only inn in the place, dine as well as you can, and some time in the evening my own confidential servant factotum and majordomo, a Mr. V. S. (I warn you he is of noble extraction), will present himself before you, reporting the arrival of the small sledge which will take you here on the next day. I send with him my heaviest fur, which I suppose with such overcoats as you may have with you will keep you from freezing on the road."

Sure enough, as I was dining, served by a Hebrew waiter, in an enormous barn-like bedroom with a freshly painted floor, the door opened and, in travelling costume of long boots, big sheep-skin cap and a short coat girt with a leather belt, the Mr. V. S. (of noble extraction), a man of about thirty-five, appeared with an air of perplexity on his open and moustachioed countenance. I got up from the table and greeted him in Polish, with, I hope, the right shade of consideration demanded by his noble blood and his confidential position. His face cleared up in a wonderful way. It appeared that, notwithstanding my uncle's earnest assurances, the good fellow had remained in doubt of our understanding each other. I was told that his last words on getting into the sledge to come to meet me shaped an anxious exclamation:

"Well! Well! Here I am going, but God only knows how I am to make myself understood to our master's nephew."

We understood each other very well from the first. He took charge of me as if I were not quite of age yet. I had a delightful boyish feeling of coming home from school when he muffled me up next morning in an enormous bear-skin travelling-coat and took his seat protectively by my side. The sledge was

a very small one and it looked utterly insignificant, almost like a toy behind the four bays harnessed two and two. We three, counting the coachman, filled it completely. This last was a young fellow with clear blue eyes; the high collar of his livery fur coat framed his cheery countenance and stood all round level with the top of his head.

"Now, Joseph," my companion addressed him, "do you think we will manage to get home before six?" His answer was that we would surely, with God's help, and providing there were no heavy drifts in the long stretch between certain villages whose names came with an extremely familiar sound to my ears. He turned out an excellent coachman with an instinct for keeping the road amongst the snow-covered fields and a natural gift of getting the best out of his horses.

"He is the son of that Joseph that I suppose the Captain remembers. He who used to drive the Captain's late grandmother of holy memory," remarked V. S. busy tucking fur rugs about my feet.

I remembered perfectly the trusty Joseph who used to drive my grandmother. Why! he it was who let me hold the reins for the first time in my life and allowed me to play with the great four-in-hand whip outside the doors of the coach-house.

"What became of him?" I asked. "He is no longer serving, I suppose."

"He served our master," was the reply. "But he died of cholera ten years ago now—that great epidemic we had. And his wife died at the same time—the whole houseful of them, and this is the only boy that was left."

The MS. of "Almayer's Folly" was reposing in the bag under our feet.

I saw again the sun setting on the plains as I saw it in the travels of my childhood. It set, clear and red, dipping into the snow in full view as if it were setting on the sea. It was twenty-three years since I had seen the sun set over that land; and we drove on in the darkness that fell swiftly upon the livid expanse of snows till suddenly, out of the waste of a white earth joining a bestarred sky, surged up black shapes, the clumps of trees about a village of the Ukrainian plain. A cottage or two glided by, a low garden wall and then, glimmering and winking through a screen of fir-trees, the lights of the master's house.

That very evening the wandering MS. of "Almayer's Folly" was unpacked and unostentatiously laid on the writing-table in my room, the guest-room which had been, I was informed in an affectedly careless tone, waiting for me for some fifteen

years or so. It attracted no attention from the affectionate presence hovering round the son of the favourite sister.

"You will have not many hours to yourself while you are staying with me, brother," he said—this form of address borrowed from the speech of our peasants being the usual expression of the highest good humour in a moment of affectionate elation. "I shall be always coming in for a chat."

As a matter of fact we had the whole house to chat in, and were everlastingly intruding upon each other. I invaded the retirement of his study where the principal feature was a colossal silver inkstand presented to him on his fiftieth year by a subscription of all his wards then living. He had been guardian of many orphans of land-owning families from the three southern provinces—ever since the year 1860. Some of them had been my schoolfellows and playmates, but not one of them, girls or boys, that I know of has ever written a novel. One or two were older than myself—considerably older, too. One of them, a visitor I remember in my early years, was the man who first put me on horseback, and his four-horse bachelor turn-out, his perfect horsemanship and general skill in manly exercises was one of my earliest admirations. I seem to remember my mother looking on from a colonnade in front of the dining-room windows as I was lifted upon the pony, held, for all I know, by the very Joseph—the groom attached specially to my grandmother's service—who died of cholera. It was certainly a young man in a dark blue, tail-less coat and huge Cossack trousers, that being the livery of the men about the stables. It must have been in 1864, but reckoning by another mode of calculating time, it was certainly in the year in which my mother obtained permission to travel south and visit her family, from the exile into which she had followed my father. For that, too, she had had to ask permission, and I know that one of the conditions of that favour was that she should be treated exactly as a condemned exile herself. Yet a couple of years later, in memory of her eldest brother who had served in the Guards and dying early left hosts of friends and a loved memory in the great world of St. Petersburg, some influential personages procured for her this permission—it was officially called the "Highest Grace"—of a four months' leave from exile.

This is also the year in which I first begin to remember my mother with more distinctness than a mere loving, wide-browed, silent, protecting presence, whose eyes had a sort of commanding sweetness; and I also remember the great gathering of all the relations from near and far, and the grey heads of the family

friends paying her the homage of respect and love in the house of her favourite brother who, a few years later, was to take the place for me of both my parents.

I did not understand the tragic significance of it all at the time, though indeed I remember that doctors also came. There were no signs of invalidism about her—but I think that already they had pronounced her doom unless perhaps the change to a southern climate could re-establish her declining strength. For me it seems the very happiest period of my existence. There was my cousin, a delightful quick-tempered little girl, some months younger than myself, whose life, lovingly watched over, as if she were a royal princess, came to an end with her fifteenth year. There were other children, too, many of whom are dead now, and not a few whose very names I have forgotten. Over all this hung the oppressive shadow of the great Russian Empire—the shadow lowering with the darkness of a new-born national hatred fostered by the Moscow school of journalists against the Poles after the ill-omened rising of 1863.

This is a far cry back from the MS. of "Almayer's Folly," and yet the public record of these formative impressions is not the whim of an uneasy egotism. These, too, are things human, already distant in their appeal. It is meet that something more should be left for the novelist's children than the colours and figures of his own hard-won creation. That which in their grown-up years may appear to the world about them as the most enigmatic side of their natures and perhaps must remain for ever obscure even to themselves, will be their unconscious response to the still voice of that inexorable past from which his work of fiction and their personalities are remotely derived.

Only in men's imagination does every truth find an effective and undeniable existence. Imagination, not invention, is the supreme master of art as of life. An imaginative and exact rendering of authentic memories may serve worthily that spirit of piety towards all things human which sanctions the conceptions of a writer of tales, and the emotions of the man reviewing his own experience.

(*To be continued*)

A Fisher of Men

By John Galsworthy

Almost every morning I could see him issue from the rectory, followed by his dogs, an Irish and a fox terrier. He would cross to the churchyard, and, at the gate, stand looking over the Cornish upland of his cure of souls, toward the sea, distant about a mile. About his black thin figure there was one bright spot, a little gold cross, dangling on his vest. His eyes at such moments were like the eyes of fishermen watching from the cliffs for pilchards to come by; but as this fisher of men marked the grey roofs covered with yellow lichen where his human fishes dwelt, red stains would come into his meagre, bearded cheeks. His lips would move, and he would turn abruptly in at the gate over which was written: "This is the door of Heaven."

A certain green spot within that churchyard was kept clear of grave-stones, which thickly covered all the rest of the ground. He never—I believe—failed to look at it, and think: "I will keep that corner free. I will not be buried amongst men who refuse their God!"

For this was his misfortune; which, like a creeping fate, had come on him year by year throughout his twenty years of rectorship. It had eaten into his heart, as will troubles which one cannot understand. In plain words, his catch of souls had dwindled season by season till, from three hundred when he was first presented to the living, it barely numbered forty. Sunday after Sunday he had conducted his three services. Twice a week from the old pulpit, scanning through the church twilight that ever scantier flock of faces, he had in his dry, spasmodic voice—whose harsh tones were, no doubt, music to himself—pronounced this conduct blessed, and that accursed, in accordance with his creed. Week after week he had told us all the sinfulness of not attending God's House, of not observing the Lord's Day. He had respected every proper ritual and ceremony; never refusing baptism even to the illegitimate, nor burial to any but such as took their lives; joining in marriage with a certain alacrity those whose conduct had caused scandal in the

village. His face had been set, too, against irreverence; no one might come to his church in flannel trousers, or without hats and bonnets.

Yet his flock had slowly diminished! Living, unmarried, in the neglected rectory, with his dogs, an old housekeeper, and a canary, he seemed to have no interests, such as shooting, or fishing, to take him away from his parish duties; he asked nothing better than to enter the houses and lives of his parishioners; and as he passed their doors—a spare figure in black garments—he could often be seen to stop, make, as it were, a minatory gesture, and walk on with his hungry eyes fixed straight before him. Year by year, to encourage them, he printed privately and distributed documents containing phrases such as these: "It is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." "But the fearful and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." When he wrote them his eyes—I fancy—flared, as though watching such penalties in process of infliction. Had not his parishioners in justice merited those fates?

If, in his walks, he came across a truant, some fisherman or farmer, he would always stop, with his eyes fastened on the culprit's face:

"You don't come to church now; how's that?"

In their West-country way, hoping to avoid unpleasantness, they would offer some polite excuse: They didn't knaw ezactly zur—the missus 'ad been ailin'; there was always somethin'—like—that! This temporising with the devil never failed to make the rector's eyes blaze, or to elicit from him a short dry laugh: "You don't know what you're saying, man! You must be mad to think you can save your soul that way! This is a Christian country!"

Yet never after one of these encounters did he see the face of that parishioner in his church again. "Let un wait!" they would murmur, "tidden likely we'm gwine to his church t'be spoken to like dogs!"

But, indeed, had they been dogs, the rector would not have spoken to them like that. To dogs his conduct was invariably gentle. He might be seen sometimes beside a field of standing corn, where the heads and forepaws of his two terriers could be marked emerging above the golden stalks, as they hunted a covey of partridges or brood of young pheasants they had scented. His harsh voice could be heard calling them: "Jim, Jim! Pat, Pat! To heel, you rascals!" But when they came out, their

tongues lolling ecstatically, he only stooped and shook his finger at them, and they would lick his hand, or rub themselves against his trousers, confident that he would never strike them. With every animal, with every bird and insect he was like this, so gentle that they trusted him completely. He could often be surprised sitting on a high slate stile, or standing in a dip of the wide road between banks of gorse and bramble, with his head, in its wide hat, rather to one side, while a bullfinch or hedge-sparrow on a branch, not three feet off, would be telling him its little tale. Before going for a walk he would sweep his field-glass over the pale-gold landscape of corn-field, scorched pasturage and sand-dune, to see if any horse seemed needing water, or sheep were lying on its back. He was an avowed enemy, too, of traps and gins, and whenever he met with one, took pains to ensure its catching nothing. Such consistent tenderness to dumb animals was perhaps due to a desire to take their side against farmers who would not come to church; but more, I think, to the feeling that the poor things had no souls, that they were here to-day and gone to-morrow—they could not be saved and must be treated with compassion, unlike those men with immortal spirits entrusted by God specially to his care, for whose wanton disobedience no punishment, perhaps, could be too harsh. It was as if, by endowing him with Her authority over other men, the Church had divided him in two.

For the view he took of life was very simple, undisturbed by any sense of irony, unspoiled by curiosity, or desire to link effect with cause, or indeed to admit the necessity of cause at all. At some fixed date God had made the earth of matter; this matter He had divided into the inanimate and animate, unconnected with each other; animate matter He had again divided into men, and animals; in men He had placed souls, making them in His own image. Men again He had divided into the Church and other men; and for the government and improvement of these other men God had passed Himself into His Church. That Church again had passed herself into her ministers. Thus, on the Church's minister—placed by Providence beyond the fear of being in the wrong—there had been enjoined the bounden duty of instructing, ruling, and saving at all costs, the souls of men.

This was why, I think, when he encountered in the simple folk committed to his charge a strange dumb democratic spirit—a wayward feeling that the Universe was indivisible, that power had not devolved, but had evolved, that things were relative, not absolute, and so forth—expressed in their

simple way, he had experienced from the first a gnawing irritation, which, like a worm, seemed to have cankered his heart. Gradually one had seen this canker stealing out into his face and body, into his eyes and voice, into the very gestures of his lean arms and hands. His whole form gave the impression of a dark tree withered and eaten by some desiccating wind, like the stiff oaks of his Cornish upland, gnarled and riven by the Atlantic gales.

Night and day in the worn old rectory, with its red conservatory, he brooded over the wrong done him by these men and women, in depriving him of his just due, the power to save their souls. It was as though an officer, gagged and bound at the head of his company, should have been forced to watch them manœuvring without him. He was like a schoolmaster tied to his desk amongst the pandemonium of his scholars. His failure was a fact strange and intolerable to him, inexplicable, tragic—a fact mured up in the mystery which each man's blindness to the nature of his own spirit wraps round his relations with his fellow beings. He could not doubt that, bereaved by their own wilful conduct of his ministrations, of the Church in fact, and, through the Church, of God, his parishioners were given up to damnation. If they were thus given up to damnation, he, their proper pastor—their rightful leader, the symbol of the Church, that is of God—was but a barren, withered thing. This thought he could not bear. Unable to see himself as others saw him, he searched to find excuses for them. He found none; for he had preached no narrow doctrines cursed with the bigotry that he recognised in the Romish or Nonconformist faiths. The doctrines and dogmas he was appointed to administer were of the due and necessary breadth, no more, no less. He was scrupulous, even against personal feeling, to observe the letter of the encyclicals. Thus, nothing in the matter of his teaching could account for the gradual defection of his flock. Nor in the manner of it could he detect anything that seemed to himself unjustified. Yet, as the tide ebbed from the base of the grey cliffs, so without haste, with deadly certainty the tide ebbed from his church. What could he, then, believe but that his parishioners meant to be personally offensive to himself?

In the school-house, at the post office, on the green, at choir practice, or on the way to service, wherever he met them, one could see that he was perpetually detecting small slights or incivilities. He had come, I think, almost to imagine that these people, who never came to church, fixed the hours of their births and deaths and marriages maliciously, that they might mock

at the inconvenience caused to one who neither could, nor would, refuse to do his duty. It was blasphemy that they committed. In avoiding God's church, yet requiring service of His minister, they were making God their servant.

One could find him any evening in his study, his bearded chin resting on his hand, the oil-lamp flaring slightly, his dogs curled up beside him, and the cloth cover drawn over the cage of his canary so that the little creature might not suffer from the light. Almost the first words he spoke would show how ceaselessly he brooded. "Nothing," he would say, "ever prospers in this village; I've started this and that! Look at the football club, look at the Bible class—all no good! With people such as these, wanting in all reverence, humility, and love of discipline! You have not had the dealings with them that I have!"

In truth his dealings with them had become notorious throughout the district. A petition, privately subscribed, and presented to the bishop for his removal had, of course, met with failure. A rector could not be removed from his living for any reason—it had been purchased for him by his father. Nor could his position as minister be interfered with on any such excuse as that of the mere personal dislike of his parishioners—as well, indeed, seek by petition to remove the Church herself. The knowledge of his unassailable position found expression among his parishioners in dogged looks, and the words: "Well, we don' trouble!"

It was in the twentieth year of his rectorship that a slight collision with the parish council drew from him this letter: "In future I shall not attend these meetings, for I do not choose to meet men who, in a Christian country, refuse to come to church, and give no reason for their conduct."

It was then late September, and the harvest festival had been appointed for the following Sunday. The week passed, but the farmers had provided no offerings for the decoration of the church; the fishermen too, accustomed by an old tradition in that parish to supply some purchased fruit in lieu of their shining fishes, sent nothing. There had obviously been a preconcerted boycott.

When the rector stepped that Sunday into the pulpit, the church was fuller than it had been for many years. Men and women who had long ceased to attend, had come, possessed evidently by an itch to see how "th' old man" would take it. We sat, row on row. The eyes of the farmers and fishermen, hardened by the elements, had in them a grim humorous curiosity, such as one may remark in the eyes of a ring of men

round some poor wretch, whom, moved by a crude sense of justice, they have baited into the loss of dignity. Their faces, with hardly an exception, seemed to say: "Sir, we were given neither hand nor voice in the choosing of you. From the first day you showed the cloven hoof. We have never wanted you. If we must have you, let us at all events get some sport out of you!"

The rector's white figure rising from the dark pulpit received motionlessly the shafts of all our glances; his own red-rimmed hungering eyes were fixed on the Bible in his hand. He gave out his text: "'The kindly fruits of the earth, in due season——'"

His voice—strangely smooth and low that morning, I remember—began discoursing of the beneficence and kindliness of God, who had allowed the earth to provide men year by year with food, according to their needs. It was as though the mellow sentiment of that season of fruition had fallen on his exiled spirit. But presently he paused, and leaning forward, looked man by man, woman by woman, at us all. Those eyes now had in them the peculiar flare which we knew so well. His voice rose again: "And how have you met this benefaction, my brethren, how have you shown your gratitude to God, embodied in His Church and in me, Her appointed representative? Do you think, then, that God will let you insult Him with impunity? Do you think in your foolish pride that God will suffer you unpunished to place this conspired slight on Him? If you imagine this, you are woefully mistaken. I know the depths of your rebellious hearts; I read them like this Book. You seek, you have always sought, to set my authority at defiance—a wayward and disobedient generation. But let me tell you: God, who has set His Holy Church over you, is a just and strong God; as a kind master chastises his dogs for their own good, so will He chastise you. You have sought to drive me out from among you——" and from his pale twisting lips, through the hush, there came a sound like a laugh—"to drive the Church, to drive God Himself, away! You could not have made a grosser error. Do you think that we, in solemn charge of your salvation, are to be moved by such puerile rebellion? Not so! God has appointed us, to God alone we are accountable. Not if every man and woman in the parish, aye, and every child, deserted this church, would I recoil one step from my duty, or resign my charge! As well imagine, forsooth, that your great Church is some poor man-elected leader, subject to your whims, and to be deposed as the fancy takes you! Do you conceive the nature

of the Church and of my office to be so mean and petty that I am to feed you with the food you wish me to feed you with, to lead you into such fields as you dictate? No! my brethren, you have not that power! Is the shepherd elected by the sheep? Listen then to the truth, or to your peril be it! The Church is a rock set up by God amongst the shifting sands of life. It comes from Heaven, not from this miserable earth. Its mission is to command, yours to obey. If the last man in this Christian country proved a rebel and a traitor, the Church and her ministers would stand immovable, as I stand here, firm in my sacred resolve to save your souls. Go down on your knees, and beg God to forgive you for the wanton insult you have offered Him! . . . Hymn 266: 'Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom!'"

Through the grey aisles, where so great a silence reigned, the notes of the organ rose. The first verse of that hymn was sung only by the choir and a few women's voices; then one by one we men joined in. Our voices swelled into a shout louder than we had ever heard in the little church before—a mutinous, harsh, roaring sound, as though in the words of that gentle hymn each one of this grim congregation were pouring out all the resentment in his heart. The roar emerging through the open door must have startled the passing tourists, and the geese in the neighbouring farmyard. It ended with a groan like the long-drawn sob of a wave sucking back.

In the village all the next week little except this sermon was discussed. Farmers and fishermen are men of the world. The conditions of their lives, guarded only by their own unremitting efforts, and backed by no authority save their own courage in the long struggle with land and sea, gives them a certain deep philosophy. Amongst the fishermen there was one white-bearded old fellow who even deemed to see a deep significance in the rector's sermon. "He putts himsel' above us, like the Czar o' Roossia," he said, "'tes the sperrit o' the thing that's wrong. Talk o' lovin' kindness, there's no lovin' kindness about the Church, 'tes all: 'Du this, or ye'll be blasted!' This man—he's a regular chip o' the old block!" He spoke, indeed, as though the rector's attitude towards them were a symbol of the Church's attitude to men. Among the farmers such analogies were veiled by the expression of simpler thoughts:

"Yu med tak' a 'arse to the watter, yu can't mak' un drink!"

"Whu wants mun, then, savin' our souls! Let mun save's own!"

"We'm not gude enough to listen to his prachin', I rackon!"

It was before a congregation consisting of his clerk, two

tourists, three old women, one of them stone deaf, and four little girls, that the unfortunate man stood next Sunday morning.

Late that same wild and windy afternoon a jeering rumour spread down in the village : " Th' old man's up tu Tresellyn 'Igh Cliff, talkin' to the watters ! "

A crowd soon gathered, eager for the least sensation that should break monotony. Beyond the combe, above the grey roofs of the fishing village, Tresellyn High Cliff rises abruptly. At the top, on the very edge, the tiny black shape of a man could be seen standing with his arms raised above his head. Now he kneeled, then stood motionless for many minutes with hands outstretched ; while behind him, the white and brown specks of his two terriers were visible, couched along the short grass. Suddenly he could be seen gesticulating wildly, and the speck shapes of the dogs leaping up, and cowering again as if terrified at their master's conduct.

For two hours this fantastic show was witnessed by the villagers with gloating gravity. The general verdict was : " Th' old man's carryin' on praaperly." But very gradually the sight of that tiny black figure appealing to his God—the God of a Church militant which lived by domination—roused the superstition of men who themselves were living in primitive conflict with the elements. They could not but appreciate what was so in keeping with the vengeful spirit of a fighting race. One could see that they even began to be afraid. Then a great burst of rain, sweeping from the sea, smothered all sight of him.

Early next morning the news spread that the rector had been found in his arm-chair, the two dogs at his feet, and the canary perched on his dead hand. His clothes were unchanged and wet, as if he had sunk into that chair, and passed away, from sheer exhaustion. The body of " the poor unfortunate gentleman "—the old housekeeper told me—was huddled and shrunk together ; his chin rested on the little gold cross dangling on his vest.

They buried him in that green spot, apart from his parishioners, which he had selected for his grave, placing on the tombstone these words :

HIC JACET

P—— W——

PASTOR ECCLESIÆ BRITANNICÆ

"GOD IS LOVE"

Stonehenge

(June 21, 1908)

By W. H. Hudson

That American from Indiana! As it was market day at Salisbury I asked him before we parted if he had seen the market, also if they had market days in the country towns in his State? He said he had looked in at the market on his way back from the cathedral. No, they had nothing of the kind in his State. Indiana was covered with a network of railroads and electric tramlines, and all country produce, down to the last new-laid egg, was collected and sent off and conveyed each morning to the towns, where it was always market day.

How sad! thought I. Poor Indiana, that once had wildness and romance and memories of a vanished race, and has now only its pretty meaningless name!

"I suppose," he said, before getting on his bicycle, "there's nothing beside the cathedral and Stonehenge to see in Wiltshire?"

"No, nothing," I returned, "and you'll think the time wasted in seeing Stonehenge."

"Why?"

"Only a few old stones."

But he went, and I have no doubt did think the time wasted, but it would be some consolation to him, on the other side, to think that he had seen it with his own eyes.

How did these same "few old stones" strike *me* on a first visit? It was one of the greatest disillusionments I ever experienced. Stonehenge looked small—pitifully small! For it is a fact that mere size is very much to us, in spite of all the teachings of science. We have heard of Stonehenge in our childhood, or boyhood—that great building of unknown origin and antiquity, its circles of stones, some still standing, others lying prostrate, like the stupendous half-shattered skeleton of a giant or monster whose stature reached to the clouds. It stands, we read or were told, on Salisbury Plain. To my uninformed,

childish mind a plain anywhere was like the plain on which I was born—an absolutely level area stretching away on all sides into infinitude; and although the effect is of a great extent of earth, we know that we actually see very little of it, that standing on a level plain we have a very near horizon. On this account any large object appearing on it, such as a house or tree or a big animal, looks very much bigger than it would on land with a broken surface.

Oddly enough, my impossible Stonehenge was derived from a sober description and an accompanying plate in a sober work—a gigantic folio in two volumes entitled "A New System of Geography," dated some time in the eighteenth century. How this ponderous work ever came to be out on the pampas, over six thousand miles from the land of its origin, is a thing to wonder at. I remember that the Stonehenge plate greatly impressed me and that I sacrilegiously cut it out of the book so as to have it!

Now we know, our reason tells us continually, that the mental pictures formed in childhood are false because the child and man have different standards, and furthermore the child mind exaggerates everything; nevertheless, such pictures persist until the scene or object so visualised is actually looked upon and the old image shattered. This refers to scenes visualised with the inner eye, but the disillusion is almost as great when we return to a home left in childhood or boyhood and look on it once more with the man's eyes. How small it is! How diminished the hills, and the trees that grew to such a vast height, whose tops once seemed "so close against the sky"—what poor little trees they now are! And the house itself, how low it is; and the rooms that seemed so wide and lofty, where our footfalls and childish voices sounded as in some vast hall, how little and how mean they look!

Children, they are very little,

the poet says, and they measure things by their size; but it seems odd that unless we grow up amid the scenes where our first impressions were received they should remain unaltered in the adult mind. The most amusing instance of a false picture of something seen in childhood and continuing through life I have met was that of an Italian peasant I knew in South America. He liked to talk to me about the cranes, those great and wonderful birds he had become acquainted with in childhood in his home on the plains of Lombardy. The birds, of course, only appeared in autumn and spring when migrating, and passed over at a vast

height above the earth. These birds, he said, were so big and had such great wings that if they came down on the flat earth they would be incapable of rising, hence they only alighted on the tops of high mountains, and as there was nothing for them to eat in such places, it being naked rock and ice, they were compelled to subsist on each other's droppings. Now it came to pass that one year during his childhood a crane, owing to some accident, came down to the ground near his home. The whole population of the village turned out to see so wonderful a bird, and were amazed at its size ; it was, he said, the strangest sight he had ever looked on. How big was it ? I asked him ; was it as big as an ostrich ? An ostrich, he said, was nothing to it ; I might as well ask him how it compared with a lapwing. He could give me no measurements : it happened when he was a child ; he had forgotten the exact size, but he had seen it with his own eyes and he could see it now in his mind—the biggest bird in the world. Very well, I said, if he could see it plainly in his mind he could give some rough idea of the wing-spread—how much would it measure from tip to tip ? He said it was perhaps fifty yards—perhaps a good deal more !

A similar trick was played by my mind about Stonehenge. As a child I had stood in imagination before it, gazing up awestruck on those stupendous stones or climbing and crawling like a small beetle on them. And what at last did I see with my physical eyes walking over the downs, miscalled a plain, anticipating something tremendous ? I finally got away from the woods at Amesbury and spied the thing I sought before me far away on the slope of a green down, and stood still and then sat down in pure astonishment. Was *this* Stonehenge—this cluster of poor little grey stones, looking in the distance like a small flock of sheep or goats grazing on that immense down ! How incredibly insignificant it appeared to me, dwarfed by its surroundings—woods and groves and farm-houses—and by the vast extent of rolling down country visible at that point. It was only when I had recovered from the first shock, when I had got to the very place and stood among the stones, that I began to experience something of the feeling appropriate to the occasion.

The feeling, however, must have been very slight since it permitted me to become interested in the appearance and actions of a few sparrows inhabiting the temple. The common sparrow is parasitical on man, consequently but rarely found at any distance from human habitations, and it seemed a little strange to find them at home at Stonehenge on the open plain.

They were very active, carrying up straws and feathers to the crevices on the trioliths where the massive imposts rest on the upright stones. I noticed the birds because of their bright appearance : they were lighter coloured than any sparrows I had ever seen, and one cock bird when flying to and fro in the sunlight looked almost white. I formed the idea that this small colony of about a dozen birds had been long established at that place and that the change in their colouring was a direct result of the unusual conditions in which they existed, where there was no shade and shelter of trees and bushes, and they were perpetually exposed for generations to the full light of the wide open sky.

On revisiting Stonehenge after an interval of some years I looked for my sparrows and failed to find them. It was at the breeding season, when they would have been there had they still existed. No doubt the little colony had been extirpated by a sparrow-hawk or by the human guardians of "The Stones," as the temple is called by the natives.

It remains to tell of my latest visit to "The Stones." I had resolved to go once in my life with the current or crowd to see the sun rise on the morning of the longest day at that place. This custom or fashion is a declining one : ten or twelve years ago a crowd of from one to two or three thousand assembled during the night to wait the great event, but the watchers have now diminished to a few hundreds, and on some years to a few scores. The fashion no doubt had its origin when Sir Norman Lockyer's theories, about Stonehenge as a Sun Temple placed so that the first rays of the sun on the longest day of the year should fall on the centre of the so-called altar or sacrificial stone placed in the middle of the temple, began to be noised about the country and accepted by every one as the true reading of an ancient riddle. But I gather from natives in the district that it is an old custom for people to go and watch for sunrise on the morning of June 21. A dozen or a score of natives, mostly old shepherds and labourers who lived near, would go and sit there for a few hours and after sunrise would trudge home, but whether or not there is any tradition or belief associated with the custom I have not ascertained. "How long has the custom existed ?" I asked a field labourer. "From the time of the old people—the Druids," he answered, and I gave it up.

To be near the spot I went to stay at Shrewton, a down-land village four miles from the stones ; or rather a group of five pretty little villages, almost touching but distinct, like five flowers or five berries on a single stem, each with its own

old church and individual or parish life. It is a pretty tree-shaded place, full of the crooning sound of turtle-doves, hidden among the wide, silent, open downs and watered by a clear, swift stream, or Winterbourne, which dries up during the heats of late summer and flows again after the autumn rains, "when the springs rise" in the chalk hills. While here, I rambled on the downs and haunted "The Stones." The road from Shrewton to Amesbury, a straight, white band lying across a green country, passes within a few yards of Stonehenge: on the right side of this narrow line the land is all private property, but on the left side and as far as one can see it mostly belongs to the War Office and is dotted over with camps. I roamed about freely enough on both sides, sometimes spending hours at a stretch not only on Government land but "within bounds" for the pleasure of spying on the military from a hiding-place in some pine grove or furze patch. I was seldom challenged, and the sentinels I came across were very mild-mannered men; they never ordered me away; they only said that the place I was in was not supposed to be free to the public.

I come across many persons who lament the recent great change on Salisbury Plain. It is hateful to them; the sight of the camp and of troops marching and drilling, of men in khaki scattered about everywhere over a hundred square leagues of plain; the smoke of firing and everlasting booming of guns. It is a desecration; the wild ancient charm of the land has been destroyed in their case, and it saddens and angers them. I was pretty free from these uncomfortable feelings.

It is said that one of the notions the Japanese have about the fox—a semi-sacred animal with them—is that, if you chance to see one crossing your path in the morning, all that comes before your vision on that day will be illusion. As an illustration of this belief it is related of a Japanese who witnessed the eruption of Krakatoa, that when the heavens were covered with blackness and kindled with intermitting flashes and the earth shaken by the detonations; and when all others, thinking the end of the world had come, were swooning with extreme fear, he viewed it without a tremor as a very sublime but illusory spectacle. For on that very morning he had seen a fox cross his path.

A somewhat similar effect is produced on our minds if we have what may be called a sense of historical time—a consciousness of the transitoriness of most things human—if we see institutions and works as the branches on a pine or larch which fail and die and fall away successively while the tree itself lives for ever, and if we measure their duration not by our own few

swift years but by the life of nations and races of men. It is, I imagine, a sense capable of cultivation and enables us to look upon many of man's doings that would otherwise vex and pain us and, as some say, destroy all the pleasure of our lives, not exactly as an illusion, as if we were Japanese and had seen a fox in the morning, but at all events in what we call a philosophic spirit.

What troubled me most was the consideration of the effect of the new conditions on the wild life of the plain—or of a very large portion of it. I knew of this before, but it was nevertheless exceedingly unpleasant when I came to witness it myself when I took to spying on the military as an amusement during my idle time. Here we have tens of thousands of very young men, boys in mind, the best fed, healthiest, happiest crowd of boys in all the land, living in a pure bracing atmosphere far removed from towns and their amusements and temptations, all mad for pleasure and excitement of some kind to fill their vacant hours each day and their holidays. Naturally they take to birds'-nesting and to hunting every living thing they encounter during their walks on the downs. Every wild thing runs and flies from them and is chased or stoned, the weak-winged young are captured and the nests picked or kicked up out of the turf. In this way the creatures are being extirpated, and one can foresee that when hares and rabbits are no more, and even the small birds of the plain, larks, pipits, wheatears, stonechats and whinchats, have vanished, the hunters in khaki will take to the chase of yet smaller creatures—crane-flies and butterflies and dragon-flies, and even the fantastic, elusive hover-flies which the hunters of little game will perhaps think the most entertaining fly of all.

But it would be idle to grieve much at this small incidental and inevitable result of making use of the plain as a military camp and training-ground. The old god of war is not yet dead and rotting on his iron hills; he is on the chalk hills with us just now, walking on the elastic turf, and one is glad to mark in his brown skin and sparkling eyes how thoroughly alive he is.

A little after midnight on the morning of June 21 a Shrewton cock began to crow, and that trumpet sound, which I never hear without a stirring of the blood on account of old associations, informed me that the late moon had arisen or was about to rise, linking the Midsummer evening and morning twilights, and I set off to Stonehenge. It was a fine, still night without a cloud in the pale, dusky blue sky, thinly sprinkled with stars and the

crescent moon coming up above the horizon. After the cock ceased crowing a tawny owl began to hoot and the long tremulous mellow sound followed me for some distance from the village, and then there was perfect silence, broken occasionally by the tinkling bells of a little company of cyclists speeding past towards "The Stones." I was in no hurry: I only wished I had started sooner to enjoy Salisbury Plain at its best time, when all the things which offend the lover of nature are invisible and non-existent. Later, when the first light began to appear in the east before two o'clock, it was no false dawn, but insensibly grew brighter and spread further, until touches of colour, very delicate, palest amber, then tender yellow and rose and purple, began to show. I felt then as we often do on such occasions, when some special motive has called us forth in time to witness this heavenly change, as of a new creation,

> The miracle of diuturnity
> Whose instancy unbeds the lark,

that the days of my life on which I had not witnessed it had been wasted days. O that unbedding of the lark! The world that was so still before now all at once had a sound; not a single song and not in one place, but a sound composed of a thousand individual sounds, rising out of the dark earth at a distance on my right hand and up into the dusky sky, spreading far and wide even as the light was spreading on the opposite side of the heavens—a sound as of multitudinous twanging, girding and clashing instruments, mingled with shrill piercing voices that were not like the voices of earthly beings. They were not human nor angelic, but passionless, and it was as if the whole visible world, the dim grassy plain and the vast pale sky sprinkled with stars, and moonlit and dawnlit, had found a voice to express the mystery and glory of the morning.

It was but eight minutes past two o'clock when this "unbedding of the lark" began, and the heavenly music lasted about fourteen minutes, then died down to silence, to recommence about half an hour later. At first I wondered why the sound was at a distance from the road on my right hand and not on my left hand as well. Then I remembered what I had seen on that side, how the "boys" at play on Sundays and in fact every day hunt the birds and pull their nests out, and I could only conclude that the lark has been pretty well wiped out from all that part of the plain over which the soldiers range.

At Stonehenge I found a good number of watchers, about a couple of hundred, already assembled, but more were coming

in continually, and a mile or so of the road to Amesbury visible from "The Stones" had at times the appearance of a ribbon of fire from the lamps of this continuous stream of coming cyclists. Altogether about five to six hundred persons gathered at "The Stones," mostly young men on bicycles who came from all the Wiltshire towns within easy distance from Salisbury to Bath. I had a few good minutes at the ancient temple when the sight of the rude, upright stones looking black against the moonlit and star-sprinkled sky produced an expected feeling in me: but the mood could not last; the crowd was too big and noisy and the noises they made too suggestive of a Bank Holiday crowd at the Crystal Palace.

At three o'clock a ribbon of slate-grey cloud appeared above the eastern horizon, and broadened by degrees, and pretty soon made it evident that the sun would be hidden at its rising at a quarter to four. The crowd, however, was not down-hearted; it sang and shouted; and by-and-by, just outside the barbed wire enclosure a rabbit was unearthed, and about three hundred young men with shrieks of excitement set about its capture. It was a lively scene, a general scrimmage, in which every one was striving to capture an elusive football with ears and legs to it, which went darting and spinning about hither and thither among the multitudinous legs, until earth compassionately opened and swallowed poor distracted bunny up. It was but little better inside the enclosure, where the big fallen stones behind the altar-stone, in the middle on which the first rays of the sun would fall, were taken possession of by a crowd of young men who sat and stood packed together like guillemots on a rock. These, too, cheated by that rising cloud of the spectacle they had come so far to see, wanted to have a little fun and began to be very obstreperous. By-and-by they found out an amusement very much to their taste.

Motor-cars were now arriving every minute, bringing important-looking persons who had timed their journeys so as to come upon the scene a little before 3.45, when the sun would show on the horizon; and whenever one of these big gentlemen appeared within the circle of stones, especially if he was big physically and grotesque-looking in his motorist get-up, he was greeted with a tremendous shout. In most cases he would start back and stand still, astonished at such an outburst, and then, concluding that the only way to save his dignity was to face the music,he would step hurriedly across the green space to hide himself behind the crowd.

The most amusing case was that of a very tall person adorned

with an exceedingly long, bright red beard, who had on a Glengarry cap and a great shawl over his overcoat. The instant this unfortunate person stepped into the arena a general wild cry of "Scotland for ever!" was raised, followed by such cheers and yells that the poor man actually staggered back as if he had received a blow, then seeing there was no other way out of it, he, too, rushed across the open space to lose himself among the others.

All this proved very entertaining, and I was glad to laugh with the crowd, thinking that after all we were taking a very mild revenge on our hated enemies, the tyrants of the roads.

The fun over, I went soberly back to my village, and finding it impossible to get to sleep I went to Sunday morning service at Shrewton church. It was strangely restful there after that noisy morning crowd at Stonehenge. The church is of white stone with Norman pillars and old oak beams laid over the roof painted or distempered blue—a quiet, peaceful blue. There was also a good deal of pleasing blue colour in the glass of the east window. The service was, as I almost invariably find it in a village church, beautiful and impressive. Listening to the music of prayer and praise, with some natural outdoor sound to fill up the pauses—the distant crow of a cock or the song of some bird close by—a corn-bunting or wren or hedge-sparrow—and the bright sunlight filling the interior, I felt as much refreshed as if kind nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep, had visited me that morning. The sermon was nothing to me; I scarcely heard it, but understood that it was about the Incarnation and the perfection of the plan of salvation and the unreasonableness of the Higher Criticism and of those who doubt because they do not understand. I remembered vaguely that on three consecutive Sundays in three village churches in the wilds of Wiltshire I had heard three sermons preached against the Higher Criticism. I thought it would have been better in this case if the priest had chosen to preach on Stonehenge and had said that he wished to heaven we were sun-worshippers, like the Persians, as well as Christians; also that we were Buddhists, and worshippers of our dead ancestors like the Chinese, and pagans and idolaters who bow down to sticks and stones, if all these added religions would serve to make us more reverent. And I wish he could have said that it was as irreligious to go to Stonehenge, that ancient temple which man raised to the unknown god thousands of years ago, to indulge in noise and horseplay at the hour of sunrise, as it would be to go to Salisbury Cathedral for such a purpose.

The Raid

(A Volunteer's Story. 1852)

By Leo Tolstoi

I

On July 12 Captain Hlopov came in at the low door of my mud-hut, wearing his epaulettes and his sabre—a full uniform, in which I had not seen him since I had arrived in the Caucasus.

"I have come straight from the colonel," he said in reply to the look of inquiry with which I met him; "our battalion is marching to-morrow."

"Where to?" I asked.

"To N——. That's where the troops are to concentrate."

"From there they will advance into action, I suppose?"

"Most likely."

"Where? What do you think?"

"I don't think. I am telling you what I know. A Tatar galloped up last night with instructions from the general—the battalion to set off, taking two days' rations of biscuit. But where, and what for, and for how long—that, my dear sir, we don't ask; we're told to go and that's enough."

"If you're only taking biscuit for two days, though, the troops won't be detained longer than that."

"Oh, well, that doesn't prove anything. . . ."

"How's that?" I asked with surprise.

"Why, they marched to Dargi taking biscuit for a week and were nearly a month there."

"And can I go with you?" I asked after a short silence.

"You can, of course, but my advice is, better not go. Why should you run any risk?"

"No, you must allow me not to follow your advice; I have been a whole month here simply on the chance of seeing an action, and you want me to miss it."

"Go, if you will. Only, wouldn't it be better to stay

here, really ? You could wait here till we came back, you could have some shooting, while we would go, as God wills ! And that would be first-rate ! " he said in such a persuasive tone that I really did feel for the first minute that it would be first-rate. I answered firmly, however, that I would not stay behind for any consideration.

" And what is there you haven't seen in it ? " the captain went on, trying to persuade me. " If you want to know what battles are like, read Mihailosky-Danilevsky's Description of War—it's a fine book. It's all described in detail there—where every corps was stationed and how the battles were fought."

" But that's just what doesn't interest me," I answered.

" What is it then ? you simply want to see how men are killed, it seems ? . . . In 1832 there was a civilian here too, a Spaniard, I think he was. He went on two expeditions with us, wearing a blue cloak of some sort . . . they did for him just the same. You can't astonish anybody here, my dear sir."

Though I felt sore at the captain's putting such a despicable construction on my intentions, I did not attempt to set him right.

" Was he a brave man ? " I asked.

" How can I tell ? he used to be always in the front; wherever there was firing, he was in it."

" Then he must have been brave," I said.

" No, it doesn't follow that a man's brave because he thrusts himself where he's not wanted."

" What do you call being brave then ? "

" Brave ? brave ? " repeated the captain, with the air of a man to whom such a question is presented for the first time. " *He's a brave man who behaves as he ought,*" he said after a moment's reflection.

I recalled Plato's definition of bravery—*the knowledge of what one need and what one need not fear*, and in spite of the vagueness and looseness of expression in the captain's definition, I thought that the fundamental idea of both was not so different as might be supposed, and that the captain's definition was, indeed, more correct than the Greek philosopher's, because if he could have expressed himself like Plato, he would probably have said that the brave man is he who fears only *what he ought to fear*, and not *what he need not fear*.

I wanted to explain my idea to the captain.

" Yes," I said, " it seems to me that in every danger there is a choice, and the choice made, for instance, under the influence

of a sense of duty is bravery, while the choice made under the influence of a low feeling is cowardice, because the man who risks his life from vanity, or curiosity, or greed of gain, can't be called brave; while, on the other hand, a man who refuses to face danger from an honourable feeling of duty to his family, or simply on conscientious grounds, can't be called a coward."

The captain looked at me with rather an odd expression while I was talking.

"Well, I'm not equal to proving that," he said, filling his pipe, "but we have an ensign here who is fond of philosophising. You must talk to him. He writes verses even."

I had only met the captain in the Caucasus, though I knew a great deal about him in Russia. His mother, Marya Ivanovna Hlopov, was living on her small estate a mile and a half from my home. Before I set off for the Caucasus, I went to see her. The old lady was delighted that I was going to see her Pashenka, as she called the gray-headed elderly captain, and that I could, like a living letter, tell him how she was getting on, and take him a parcel from home. After regaling me with a capital pie and salted game, Marya Ivanovna went into her bedroom and fetched from there a rather large black amulet, with a black silk ribbon sewn on it.

"This is our Holy Guardian, Mother of the Burning Bush," she said, crossing herself, and kissing the image of the Mother of God, before putting it into my hand, "be so kind, sir, as to give it to him. When he went to the *Capcasus*, you know, I had a service sung for him, and made a vow that if he were alive and unhurt, I would have that image made of the Holy Mother. Now it's eighteen years that our Guardian Lady and the holy saints have had mercy on him. He has not once been wounded, and yet what battles he has been in! . . . When Mihailo, who was with him, told me about it, would you believe it, it made my hair stand on end. If I hear anything about him, it's only from other people, though; he, dear boy, never writes a word to me about his campaigns—he's afraid of frightening me."

It was only in the Caucasus, and then not from the captain, that I learned that he had been four times severely wounded, and, I need hardly say, had written no more to his mother about his wounds than about his campaigns.

"So let him wear this holy figure now," she went on; "I send him my blessing with it. The Most Holy Guardian Mother will protect him! Let him always have it on him, especially in battles. Tell him, please, that his mother bids him."

I promised to carry out her instructions exactly.

"I am sure you will like my Pashenka," the old lady went on, "he's such a dear boy! Would you believe it, not a year goes by without his sending me money, and Annushka, my daughter, has had a great deal of help from him, too . . . and it's all out of nothing but his pay! I am ever truly thankful to God," she concluded, with tears in her eyes, "for giving me such a son."

"Does he often write to you?" I asked.

"Not often; usually only once a year; when he sends money, he'll send a word or two, but not else. 'If I don't write, mother,' he says, 'it means that I'm alive and well; if anything, which God forbid, should happen, they'll write to you for me.'"

When I gave the captain his mother's present—it was in my hut—he asked for a piece of tissue-paper, wrapped it carefully up and put it away. I gave him a minute account of his mother's daily life; the captain did not speak. When I finished, he turned away and was rather a long time filling his pipe in the corner.

"Yes, she's a splendid old lady!" he said without turning, in a rather husky voice. "Will God send me back to see her again, I wonder?"

A very great deal of love and sadness was expressed in those simple words.

"Why do you serve here?" I said.

"I have to," he answered with conviction. "The double pay for active service means a great deal for a poor man like me."

The captain lived carefully; he did not play; seldom drank, and smoked a cheap tobacco, which for some unknown reason he used to call not shag, but *Sambrotalik*. I liked the captain from the first; he had one of those quiet, straightforward Russian faces, into whose eyes one finds it pleasant and easy to look straight. But after this conversation I felt a genuine respect for him.

II

At four o'clock next morning the captain came to fetch me He was wearing a frayed old coat without epaulettes, full Caucasian breeches, a white astrachan cap with the wool shabby and yellowish, and he had an inferior-looking Asiatic sabre slung over his shoulder. The white Caucasian pony, on which he was mounted, held its head down, moved with little ambling paces, and incessantly shook its thin tail. Though there was nothing martial nor fine-looking about the good captain's appearance,

it showed such indifference to everything surrounding him that it inspired an involuntary feeling of respect.

I did not keep him waiting a minute, but got on my horse at once, and we rode out of the fortress gates together.

The battalion was already some six hundred yards ahead of us and looked like a dark, compact heavy mass. We could only tell that they were infantry because the bayonets were seen like a dense mass of long needles, and from time to time we caught snatches of the soldiers' song, the drum, and the exquisite tenor voice of the leading singer of the sixth company, which I had heard with delight more than once in the fortress. The road ran down the midst of a deep and wide ravine, along the bank of a little stream, which was at that time "in play," that is to say, overflowing its banks. Flocks of wild pigeons were hovering about it, settling on its stony bank, and then wheeling in the air and flying up in swift circles out of sight. The sun was not yet visible, but the very top of the cliff on the right side began to show patches of sunlight. The grey and whitish stones, the yellow-green moss, the dense bushes of Christ's thorn, dog-berries and dwarf elm, stood out with extraordinary sharpness, in the limpid golden light of sunrise. But the hollow and the opposite side of the ravine were damp and dark with a thick mist that hung over them in rolling uneven masses like smoke, and through it dimly one caught an elusive medley of changing hues, pale lilac, almost black, dark green and white. Straight before us, against the dark blue of the horizon, rose with startling clearness the dazzling, dead-white of the snow mountains, with their fantastic shadows and outlines that were daintily beautiful to the minutest detail. Grasshoppers, crickets, and thousands of other insects were awake in the high grass and filling the air with their shrill, incessant sounds. An infinite multitude of tiny bells seemed to be ringing just in one's ears. The air was full of the smell of water and grass and mist, of the smell, in fact, of a fine morning in summer.

The captain struck a light and lit his pipe; the smell of the *Sambrotalik* tobacco and of the tinder were exceptionally pleasant to me.

We kept on the side of the road so as to overtake the infantry more quickly. The captain seemed more thoughtful than usual. He did not take his Daghestan pipe out of his mouth, and at every yard gave a shove with his feet to urge on his pony who, swaying from side to side, left a scarcely visible dark green track in the wet, long grass. An old cock pheasant flew up from under its very hoofs, with the gurgling cry and the whir

of wings that sets a sportsman's heart beating, and slowly rose in the air. The captain did not take the slightest notice of it.

We were almost overtaking the battalion when we heard the hoofs of a galloping horse behind us, and in the same instant a very pretty and boyish youth, in the uniform of an officer, and a high white astrachan cap, galloped up. As he passed us, he smiled, nodded, and waved his whip. . . . I had only time to notice that he sat his horse and held his reins with a certain individual grace, and that he had beautiful black eyes, a delicate nose, and only the faintest trace of moustache. I was particularly charmed at his not being able to help smiling when he saw we were admiring him. From that smile alone one could have been sure that he was very young.

"And what is it he's galloping to?" the captain muttered with an air of vexation, not removing his pipe from his lips.

"Who is that?" I asked him.

"Ensign Alanin, a subaltern of my company. . . . It's only a month since he joined from the military school."

"I suppose it's the first time he's going into action," I said.

"That's just why he's so happy about it!" answered the captain, shaking his head with an air of profundity. "Ah, youth!"

"Well, how can he help being glad? I can understand that for a young officer it must be very interesting."

The captain did not speak for a couple of minutes.

"That's just what I say; it's youth!" he resumed in his bass voice. "What is there to be pleased about before one knows what it's like! When you have been out often, you're not pleased at it. We've now, let us say, twenty officers on the march; that somebody will be killed or wounded, that's certain. To-day it's my turn, to-morrow his, and next day another man's. So what is there to be happy about?"

III

The bright sun had scarcely risen from behind the mountains and begun to shine on the valley along which we were marching, when the billowy clouds of mist parted, and it became hot. The soldiers with their guns and knapsacks on their backs walked slowly along the dusty road; from time to time I heard snatches of Little Russian talk and laughter in the ranks. A few old soldiers in white canvas tunics—for the most part sergeants or

corporals—marched along on the side of the road, smoking their pipes and talking soberly. The waggons, drawn by three horses and piled high with baggage, moved forward at a walking pace, stirring up a thick, immovable cloud of dust. The officers rode in front; some of them were jigiting, as they say in the Caucasus, that is, whipping up their horses till they made them prance some four times, and then sharply pulling them up with their heads on one side. Others entertained themselves with the singers, who, in spite of the stifling heat, untiringly kept up one song after another. About three hundred yards in front of the infantry, on a big white horse surrounded by Tatar cavalry, rode an officer famous in the regiment for his reckless daring, and for being a man who would tell the truth to any one's face. He was a tall, handsome man, dressed in Asiatic style, in a black tunic with embroidered borders, leggings to match, new, richly embroidered, closely fitting shoes, a yellow Circassian coat and a tall astrachan cap tilted backwards on his head. Over his chest and back he had bands of silver embroidery in which his powder-horn was thrust in front and his pistol behind. A second pistol and a dagger in a silver sheath hung at his belt. Over all this was girt a sabre in a red morocco case edged with embroidery, and over his shoulder was slung a rifle in a black case. His costume, his manner of riding and holding himself, and every movement he made showed that he was trying to look like a Tatar. He even spoke to the Tatars riding with him in a language I did not know. But from the puzzled and sarcastic looks the latter gave one another, I fancied that they did not understand him either. This was a young lieutenant, one of the so-called jigit-gallants who model themselves on Marlinsky and Lermontov. These men cannot see the Caucasus except through the prism of the "heroes of our times," of Mullah-Nur, &c., and in every gesture they are guided not by their own tastes but by the example of these paragons.

The lieutenant, for instance, was perhaps fond of the society of ladies and persons of importance—generals, colonels, adjutants—I feel sure, indeed, that he was very fond of such society because he was excessively vain. But he thought it his imperative duty to turn his rough side to all people of consequence, though his rudeness after all never amounted to very much. And whenever a lady made her appearance at the fortress, he felt bound to pass by her window with his boon companions, wearing a red shirt and with nothing but slippers on his bare feet, and to shout and swear as loudly as possible. But all this was

not so much from a desire to offend her as to show her what splendid white legs he had and how easy it would be to fall in love with him, if he chose to wish it.

Often he would go out at night into the mountains with two or three peaceable Tatars to lie in ambush by the wayside so as to waylay and kill hostile Tatars who might pass by, and though he felt more than once in his heart that there was nothing very daring in this, he felt bound to make men suffer because he affected to be disappointed in them for some reason and so affected to hate and despise them. Two objects he never removed from his person; a large ikon on his neck and a dagger which he wore over his shirt, even when he went to bed. He genuinely believed that he had enemies. To persuade himself that he must be avenged on some one and wipe out some insult with blood was his greatest enjoyment. He was convinced that the feelings of hatred, revenge and disdain for the human race were the loftiest and most poetical sentiments. But his mistress, a Circassian, of course, with whom I happened to become acquainted later on, told me that he was the kindest and gentlest of men, and that every evening after jotting down his gloomy reflections he made up his accounts on ruled paper and knelt down to say his prayers. And what sufferings he underwent simply to appear to himself what he wanted to be! For his comrades and the soldiers were unable to regard him as he wanted them to. On one of his night expeditions with his companions he chanced to wound one of the hostile tribesmen in the foot with a bullet and took him prisoner. This man lived for seven weeks after this in the lieutenant's quarters, and the latter tended him and looked after him as though he had been his dearest friend, and when his wound was healed let him go loaded with presents. Later on, when on one of his expeditions, the lieutenant was retreating in a line of scouts and firing to keep back the enemy, he heard one among them call him by his name and his wounded guest came forward and invited the lieutenant by signs to do the same. The latter went forward to meet his visitor and shook hands with him. The mountaineers kept their distance and did not fire at him; but as soon as the lieutenant turned his horse, several shot at him and one bullet grazed him below the spine.

Another incident I saw myself. There was a fire in the fortress one night, and two companies of soldiers were engaged in putting it out. Suddenly the tall figure of a man on a coal-black horse appeared in the midst of the crowd, lighted up by the red glow of the fire. The figure pushed through the

crowd and rode straight to the fire. Riding right up to it the lieutenant leaped off his horse and ran into the house, one side of which was in flames. Five minutes later he came out with his hair singed and a burn on his elbow, carrying in his coat two pigeons which he had rescued from the fire.

His surname was Rosenkranz; but he often talked of his origin, somehow tracing his descent from the Varengians, and proving unmistakably that he and his fathers before him were of the purest Russian blood.

IV

The sun had passed the zenith and was casting hot rays across the baked air upon the parched earth. The dark blue sky was perfectly clear; only at the foot of the snow mountains whitish lilac clouds were beginning to gather. The still air seemed to be filled with a sort of transparent dust. It had become unbearably hot. When we had come half-way we reached a little stream where the troops halted. The soldiers stacking up their rifles rushed to the stream; the officer in command of the battalion sat down on a drum in the shade, and expressing in every feature of his face the full dignity of his grade, disposed himself for a meal with his officers. The captain lay down on the grass under the company's baggage-waggon. Gallant Lieutenant Rosenkranz and a few other young officers, squatting on outspread cloaks, were preparing for a carouse, as might be seen from the bottles and flagons set out around them and from the peculiar animation of the singers, who stood in a semicircle round them, playing and whistling a Caucasian dancing-song to the tune of the Lesginka :

Shamil plotted a rebellion
In the years gone by
Tri-ri, ra-ta-ti
In the years gone by.

Among these officers was the youthful ensign who had overtaken us in the morning. He was very amusing; his eyes were shining, his tongue faltered a little from time to time; he was longing to kiss every one and to tell them all how he loved them. . . . Poor boy! He had not learned yet that he might seem ridiculous in feeling so, that his frankness and the affectionateness with which he approached everybody might set other people jeering at him instead of giving him the affection he longed for so much. Nor did he know either that when he flung him-

self down on his cloak, and leaning on his arm tossed back his thick black hair, he was exceedingly charming.

Two officers were sitting under a waggon playing "fools," with a barrel for a card-table.

I listened with curiosity to the talk of the soldiers and the officers, and watched the expression of their faces attentively. But not in a single one of them could I discover a trace of the uneasiness I was feeling myself. Jokes, laughter, stories—all expressed the general carelessness and indifference to the danger before them. It was as though no one could conceive that some of them were destined not to come back along that road!

V

At seven o'clock in the evening, dusty and weary, we entered the fortified gates of the fortress of N——. The sun was setting and casting a slanting pink light on the picturesque batteries of the fortress and its gardens full of tall poplars, on the tilled yellow fields, and on the white clouds, which, huddling about the snow mountains as though in mimicry, formed a chain as fantastic as beautiful. The new crescent moon looked like a transparent cloud on the horizon. In the Tatar village near the fortress, a Tatar on the roof of a hut was calling all the faithful to prayer. Our singers, with fresh energy and vigour, broke out again.

After resting and tidying myself up a little, I went to see an adjutant of my acquaintance to ask him to inform the general of my intentions. On the way from the outlying part of the town where I was staying I observed things I had not expected to find in the fortress of N——. An elegant victoria, in which I saw a fashionable hat and heard chatter in French, overtook me. From the open window of the commander's house floated the strains of some "Lizanka" or "Katenka" polka, played on a piano that was wretchedly out of tune. In the tavern by which I passed, I saw several clerks sitting over glasses of beer with cigarettes in their hands, and I overheard one of them saying to the other: "Excuse me . . . but as regards politics, Marya Grigoryevna is our leading lady." A Jew, with bent figure and a sickly looking face, wearing a shabby coat, was dragging along a squeaky, broken barrel-organ, and the whole suburb was echoing with the last bars of "Lucia." Two women with rustling skirts, silk kerchiefs on their heads, and bright-coloured parasols in their hands, swam by me on the

wooden footpath. Before a low-pitched little house two girls, one in a pink and the other in a blue dress, stood with bare heads, going off into shrill artificial giggles, evidently in the hope of attracting the attention of officers as they walked by. Officers in new coats, white gloves and dazzling epaulettes swaggered jauntily about the streets and the boulevard.

I found my acquaintance on the ground-floor of the general's house. I had only just had time to explain what I wanted, and he to reply that it could easily be managed, when an elegant carriage, which I had noticed at the entrance, rolled past the window at which we were sitting. A tall, well-built man, in an infantry uniform with the epaulettes of a major, got out of the carriage and went towards the general's.

"Ah, excuse me, please," said the adjutant getting up, "I must go to tell the general."

"Who has come?" I asked.

"The countess," he answered, and buttoning up his uniform he ran upstairs.

A few minutes later a short but very handsome man, in a coat without epaulettes, with a white cross at his button-hole, came out on to the steps. Behind him came the major, the adjutant and two other officers. In the carriage, in the voice and in every gesture of the general one could see that he was a man well aware of his own great consequence.

"Bon soir, madame la comtesse," he said, putting his hand in at the carriage window.

A hand in a kid glove pressed his hand, and a pretty, smiling little face under a yellow hat appeared at the carriage window.

Of the conversation, which lasted several minutes, I only heard, in passing, the general say with a smile:

"Vous savez que j'ai fait vœu de combattre les infidèles, prenez donc garde de le devenir."

There was laughter in the carriage.

"Adieu donc, cher général."

"Non, à revoir," said the general, as he mounted the steps, "n'oubliez pas que je m'invite pour la soirée de demain."

The carriage rolled away.

"Here, again, is a man," I mused as I went back home, "who has everything a Russian can desire; rank, wealth, distinction—and on the eve of a battle which will end, God only knows how, this man is jesting with a pretty woman and promising to drink tea with her next day, just as though he were meeting her at a ball!"

I met there, at the adjutant's, a man who amazed me even more. He was a lieutenant of the K. regiment, a young man of almost womanish timidity and gentleness. He had come to the adjutant to pour out his anger and indignation against the persons who had, he said, intrigued against his receiving a command in the coming action. He said it was disgusting to behave in such a way, that it was unworthy of comrades, that he should not forget it, &c. Intently as I watched the expression of his face and listened to the sound of his voice, I could not help believing that he was in earnest, that he was deeply hurt and disappointed at not being allowed to fire at Circassians and to expose himself to their fire. He was as sore as a child who has been unjustly whipped. . . . I was utterly unable to understand it all.

Translated by CONSTANCE GARNETT.

(To be continued)

Tono-Bungay

A Romance of Commerce

By H. G. Wells

BOOK THE FIRST: THE DAYS BEFORE TONO-BUNGAY WAS INVENTED

CHAPTER THE FIRST

OF BLADESOVER HOUSE, AND MY MOTHER; AND THE CONSTITUTION OF SOCIETY

§ 1

Most people in this world seem to live "in character"; they have a beginning, a middle and an end, and the three are congruous one with another and true to the rules of their type. You can speak of them as being of this sort of people or that. They are, as theatrical people say, no more (and no less) than "character actors." They have a class, they have a place, they know what is becoming in them and what is due to them, and their proper size of tombstone tells at last how properly they have played the part. But there is also another kind of life that is not so much living as a miscellaneous tasting of life. One gets hit by some unusual transverse force, one is jerked out of one's stratum and lives crosswise for the rest of the time, and, as it were, in a succession of samples. That has been my lot, and that is what has set me at last writing something in the nature of a novel. I have got an unusual series of impressions that I want very urgently to tell. I have seen life at very different levels, and at all these levels I have seen it with a sort of intimacy and in good faith. I have been a native in many social countries. I have been the unwelcome guest of a working baker, my cousin, who has since died in the Chatham infirmary; I have eaten illegal snacks—the unjustifiable gifts of footmen—in pantries, and been despised for my want of style (and subsequently

married and divorced) by the daughter of a gasworks clerk; and—to go to my other extreme—I was once—oh, glittering days!—an item in the house-party of a countess. She was, I admit, a countess with a financial aspect, but still, you know, a countess. I've seen these people at various angles. At the dinner-table I've met not simply the titled but the great. On one occasion—it is my brightest memory—I upset my champagne over the trousers of the greatest statesman in the empire—Heaven forbid I should be so invidious as to name him!—in the warmth of our mutual admiration.

And once (though it is the most incidental thing in my life) I murdered a man. . . .

Yes, I've seen a curious variety of people and ways of living altogether. Odd people they all are, great and small, very much alike at bottom and curiously different on their surfaces. I wish I had ranged just a little further both up and down, seeing I have ranged so far. Royalty must be worth knowing and very great fun. But my contacts with princes have been limited to quite public occasions, nor at the other end of the scale have I had what I should call an inside acquaintance with that dusty but attractive class of people who go about on the high roads drunk but *en famille* (so redeeming the minor lapse), in the summer-time, with a perambulator, lavender to sell, sun-brown children, a smell, and ambiguous bundles that fire the imagination. Navvies, farm-labourers, sailormen and stokers, all such as sit in 1834 beer-houses, are beyond me also, and I suppose must remain so now for ever. My intercourse with the ducal rank too has been negligible; I once went shooting with a duke, and in an outburst of what was no doubt snobbishness, did my best to get him in the legs. But that failed.

I'm sorry I haven't done the whole lot though. . . .

You will ask by what merit I achieved this remarkable social range, this extensive cross-section of the British social organism. It was the Accident of Birth. It always is in England. Indeed, if I may make the remark so cosmic, everything is. But that is by the way. I was my uncle's nephew, and my uncle was no less a person than Edward Ponderevo, whose comet-like transit of the financial heavens happened—it is now ten years ago! Do you remember the days of Ponderevo, the *great* days, I mean, of Ponderevo? Perhaps you had a trifle in some world-shaking enterprise! Then you know him only too well. Astraddle on Tono-Bungay, he flashed athwart the empty heavens—like a comet—rather, like a stupendous rocket!—and overawed investors spoke of his star. At his zenith he burst into a cloud

of the most magnificent promotions. What a time that was! The Napoleon of domestic conveniences! . . .

I was his nephew, his peculiar and intimate nephew, I was hanging on to his coat-tails all the way through. I made pills with him in the chemist's shop at Wimblehurst before he began. I was, you might say, the stick of his rocket; and after our tremendous soar, after he had played with millions, a golden rain in the sky, after my bird's-eye view of the modern world, I fell again, a little scarred and blistered perhaps, two and twenty years older, with my youth gone, my manhood eaten in upon, but greatly edified, into this Thames-side yard, into these white heats and hammerings, amidst the fine realities of steel—to think it all over in my leisure and jot down the notes and inconsecutive observations that make this book. It was more, you know, than a figurative soar. The zenith of that career was surely our flight across the channel in the Lord Roberts *β*. . . .

I warn you this book is going to be something of an agglomeration. I want to trace my social trajectory (and my uncle's) as the main line of my story, but as this is my first novel and almost certainly my last, I want to get in too all sorts of things that struck me, things that amused me and impressions I got—even although they don't minister directly to my narrative at all. I want to set out my own queer love experiences too, such as they are, for they troubled and distressed and swayed me hugely, and they still seem to me to contain all sorts of irrational and debatable elements that I shall be the clearer-headed for getting on paper. And possibly I may even flow into descriptions of people who are really no more than people seen in transit, just because it amuses me to recall what they said and did to us, and more particularly how they behaved in the brief but splendid glare of Tono-Bungay and its still more glaring offspring. It lit some of them up, I can assure you! Indeed, I want to get in all sorts of things. My ideas of a novel all through are comprehensive rather than austere. . . .

Tono-Bungay still figures on the hoardings, it stands in rows in every chemist's storeroom, it still assuages the coughs of age and brightens the elderly eye and loosens the elderly tongue; but its social glory, its financial illumination, have faded from the world for ever. And I, sole scorched survivor from the blaze, sit writing of it here in an air that is never still for the clang and thunder of machines, on a table littered with working drawings, and amid fragments of models and notes about velocities and air and water-pressures and trajectories—of an altogether different sort from that of Tono-Bungay.

§ 2

I write that much and look at it, and wonder whether, after all, this is any fair statement of what I am attempting in this book. I've given, I see, an impression that I want to make simply a hotch-potch of anecdotes and experiences with my uncle swimming in the middle as the largest lump of victual. I'll own that here, with the pen already started, I realise what a fermenting mass of things learnt and emotions experienced and theories formed I've got to deal with, and how, in a sense, hopeless my book must be from the very outset. I suppose what I'm really trying to render is nothing more nor less than Life—as one man has found it. I want to tell—*myself*, and my impressions of the thing as a whole, to say things I have come to feel intensely of the laws, traditions, usages and ideas we call society, and how we poor individuals get driven and lured and stranded among these windy, perplexing shoals and channels. I've got, I suppose, to a time of life when things begin to take on shapes that have an air of reality, and become no longer material for dreaming, but interesting in themselves. I've reached the criticising, novel-writing age, and here I am writing mine—my one novel—without having any of the discipline to refrain and omit that I suppose the regular novel-writer acquires.

I've read an average share of novels and made some starts before this beginning, and I've found the restraints and rules of the art (as I made them out) impossible for me. I like to write, I am keenly interested in writing, but it is not my technique. I'm an engineer with a patent or two and a set of ideas ; most of whatever artist there is in me has been given to turbine machines and boat-building and the problem of flying, and do what I will I fail to see how I can be other than a lax, undisciplined story-teller. I must sprawl and flounder, comment and theorise, if I am to get the thing out I have in mind. And it isn't a constructed tale I have to tell but unmanageable realities. My love-story—and if only I can keep up the spirit of truth-telling all through as strongly as I have now, you shall have it all—falls into no sort of neat scheme of telling. It involves three separate feminine persons. It's all mixed up with the other things. . . .

But I've said enough, I hope, to excuse myself for the method or want of method in what follows, and I think I had better tell without further delay of my boyhood and my early impressions in the shadow of Bladesover House.

§ 3

There came a time when I realised that Bladesover House was not all it seemed, but when I was a little boy I took the place with the entirest faith as a complete authentic microcosm. I believed that the Bladesover system was a little working model—and not so very little either—of the whole world.

Let me try and give you the effect of it.

Bladesover lies up on the Kentish Downs, eight miles perhaps from Ashborough; and its old pavilion, a little wooden parody of the temple of Vesta at Tibur, upon the hill crest behind the house, commands in theory at least a view of either sea, of the Channel southward and the Thames to the north-east. The park is the second largest in Kent, finely wooded with well-placed beeches, many elms and some sweet chestnuts, abounding in little valleys and hollows of bracken, with springs and a stream and three fine ponds and multitudes of fallow deer. The house was built in the eighteenth century, it is of pale red brick in the style of a French château, and save for one pass among the crests which opens to blue distances, to minute, remote, oast-set farm-houses and copses and wheat-fields and the occasional gleam of water, its hundred and seventeen windows look on nothing but its own wide and handsome territories. A semicircular screen of great beeches masks the church and village, which cluster picturesquely about the high road along the skirts of the great park. Northward, at the remotest corner of that enclosure, is a second dependent village, Ropedean, less fortunate in its greater distance and also on account of a rector. This divine was indeed rich, but he was vindictively economical because of some shrinkage of his tithes; and by reason of his use of the word Eucharist for the Lord's Supper he had become altogether estranged from the great ladies of Bladesover. So that Ropedean was in the shadows through all that youthful time.

Now the unavoidable suggestion of that wide park and that fair large house, dominating church, village and the country-side, was that they represented the thing that mattered supremely in the world, and that all other things had significance only in relation to them. They represented the Gentry, the Quality, by and through and for whom the rest of the world, the farming folk and the labouring folk, the tradespeople of Ashborough, and the upper servants and the lower servants and the servants of the estate, breathed and lived and were permitted. And the Quality did it so quietly and thoroughly, the great house mingled so solidly and effectually with earth and sky, the contrast of its

spacious hall and saloon and galleries, its airy housekeeper's room and warren of offices with the meagre dignities of the vicar, and the pinched and stuffy rooms of even the post-office people and the grocer, so enforced these suggestions that it was only when I was a boy of thirteen or fourteen and some queer inherited strain of scepticism had set me doubting whether Mr. Bartlett, the vicar, did really know with certainty all about God, that as a further and deeper step in doubting I began to question the final rightness of the gentlefolks, their primary necessity in the scheme of things. But once that scepticism had awakened it took me fast and far. By fourteen I had achieved terrible blasphemies and sacrilege; I had resolved to marry a viscount's daughter, and I had blacked the left eye—I think it was the left—of her half-brother, in open and declared rebellion.

But of that in its place.

The great house, the church, the village, and the labourers and the servants in their stations and degrees, seemed to me, I say, to be a closed and complete social system. About us were other villages and great estates, and from house to house, interlacing, correlated, the Gentry, the fine Olympians, came and went. The country towns seemed mere collections of shops, marketing places for the tenantry, centres for such education as they needed, as entirely dependent on the gentry as the village and scarcely less directly so. I thought this was the order of the whole world. I thought London was only a greater country town where the gentlefolk kept town-houses and did their greater shopping under the magnificent shadow of the greatest of all fine gentlewomen, the Queen. It seemed to be in the divine order. That all this fine appearance was already sapped, that there were forces at work that might presently carry all this elaborate social system, in which my mother instructed me so carefully that I might understand my "place," to Limbo, had scarcely dawned upon me even by the time that Tono-Bungay was fairly launched upon the world.

There are many people in England to-day upon whom it has not yet dawned. There are times when I doubt whether any but a very inconsiderable minority of English people realise how extensively this ostensible order has even now passed away. The great houses stand in the parks still, the cottages cluster respectfully on their borders, touching their eaves with their creepers, the English countryside—you can range through Kent from Bladesover northward and see—persists obstinately in looking what it was. It is like an early day in a fine October. The hand of change rests on it all, unfelt, unseen; resting for

awhile, as it were half reluctantly, before it grips and ends the thing for ever. One frost and the whole face of things will be bare, links snap, patience end, our fine foliage of pretences lie glowing in the mire.

For that we have still to wait a little while. The new order may have gone far towards shaping itself, but just as in that sort of lantern show that used to be known in the village as the "Dissolving Views," the scene that is going remains upon the mind, traceable and evident, and the newer picture is yet enigmatical long after the lines that are to replace those former ones have grown bright and strong, so that the new England of our children's children is still a riddle to me. The ideas of democracy, of equality, and above all of promiscuous fraternity have certainly never really entered into the English mind. But what *is* coming into it ? All this book, I hope, will bear a little on that. Our people never formulates ; it keeps words for jests and ironies. In the meanwhile the old shapes, the old attitudes remain, subtly changed and changing still, sheltering strange tenants. Bladesover House is now let furnished to Sir Reuben Lichtenstein, and has been since old Lady Drew died ; it was my odd experience to visit there, in the house of which my mother had been housekeeper, when my uncle was at the climax of Tono-Bungay It was curious to notice then the little differences that had come to things with this substitution. To borrow an image from my mineralogical days, these Jews were not so much a new British gentry as "pseudomorphous" after the gentry. They are a very clever people, the Jews, but not clever enough to suppress their cleverness. I wished I could have gone downstairs to savour the tone of the pantry. It would have been very different I know. Hawksnest, over beyond, I noted, had its pseudomorph too ; a newspaper proprietor of the type that hustles along with stolen ideas from one loud sink-or-swim enterprise to another, had bought the place outright ; Redgrave was in the hands of brewers.

But the people in the villages, so far as I could detect, saw no difference in their world. Two little girls bobbed and an old labourer touched his hat convulsively as I walked through the village. He still thought he knew his place—and mine. I did not know him, but I would have liked dearly to have asked him if he remembered my mother, if either my uncle or old Lichtenstein had been man enough to stand being given away like that.

In that English countryside of my boyhood every human being had a "place." It belonged to you from your birth like the colour of your eyes, it was inextricably your destiny. Above

you were your betters, below you were your inferiors, and there were even an unstable questionable few, cases so disputable that you might, for the rough purposes of every day at least, regard them as your equals. Head and centre of our system was Lady Drew, her "leddyship," shrivelled, garrulous, with a wonderful memory for genealogies and very, very old, and beside her and nearly as old, Miss Somerville, her cousin and companion. These two old souls lived like dried-up kernels in the great shell of Bladesover House, the shell that had once been gaily full of fops, of fine ladies in powder and patches and courtly gentlemen with swords; and when there was no company they spent whole days in the corner parlour just over the housekeeper's room, between reading and slumber and caressing their two pet dogs. When I was a boy I used always to think of these two poor old creatures as superior beings living, like God, somewhere through the ceiling. Occasionally they bumped about a bit and one even heard them overhead, which gave them a greater effect of reality without mitigating their vertical predominance. Sometimes too I saw them. Of course if I came upon them in the park or in the shrubbery (where I was a trespasser) I hid or fled in pious horror, but I was upon due occasion taken into the Presence by request. I remember her "leddyship" then as a thing of black silks and a golden chain, a quavering injunction to me to be a good boy, a very shrunken loose-skinned face and neck, and a ropy hand that trembled a half-crown into mine. Miss Somerville hovered behind, a paler thing of broken lavender and white and black, with screwed-up, sandy-lashed eyes. Her hair was yellow and her colour bright, and when we sat in the housekeeper's room of a winter's night warming our toes and sipping elder wine, her maid would tell us the simple secrets of that belated flush. . . . After my fight with young Garvell I was of course banished, and I never saw those poor old painted goddesses again.

Then there came and went on these floors over our respectful heads, the Company; people I rarely saw, but whose tricks and manners were imitated and discussed by their maids and valets in the housekeeper's room and the steward's room—so that I had them through a medium at second hand. I gathered that none of the company were really Lady Drew's equals, they were greater and lesser—after the manner of all things in our world. Once I remember there was a Prince, with a real live gentleman in attendance, and that was a little above our customary levels and excited us all, and perhaps raised our expectations unduly. Afterwards, Rabbits, the butler, came into my mother's room downstairs, red with indignation and with tears in his eyes.

"Look at *that!*" gasped Rabbits. My mother was speechless with horror. *That* was a sovereign, a mere sovereign, such as you might get from any commoner!

After Company, I remember, came anxious days, for the poor old women upstairs were left tired and cross and vindictive, and in a state of physical and emotional indigestion after their social efforts. . . .

On the lowest fringe of these real Olympians hung the vicarage people, and next to them came those ambiguous beings who are neither Quality nor subjects. The vicarage people certainly hold a place by themselves in the typical English scheme; nothing is more remarkable than the progress the Church has made—socially—in the last two hundred years. In the early eighteenth century the vicar was rather under than over the house-steward, and was deemed a fitting match for the housekeeper or any not too morally discredited discard. The eighteenth-century literature is full of his complaints that he might not remain at table to share the pie. He rose above these indignities because of the abundance of younger sons. When I meet the large assumptions of the contemporary cleric, I am apt to think of these things. It is curious to note that to-day that down-trodden, organ-playing creature, the Church of England village Schoolmaster, holds much the same position as the seventeenth-century parson. The doctor in Bladesover ranked below the vicar but above the "vet," artists and summer visitors squeezed in above or below this point according to their appearance and expenditure, and then in a carefully arranged scale came the tenantry, the butler and housekeeper, the village shopkeeper, the head keeper, the cook, the publican, the second keeper, the blacksmith (whose status was complicated by his daughter keeping the post-office—and a fine hash she used to make of telegrams too!) the village shopkeeper's eldest son, the first footman, younger sons of the village shopkeeper, his first assistant, and so forth. . . .

All these conceptions and applications of a universal precedence and much else I drank in at Bladesover, as I listened to the talk of valets, ladies'-maids, Rabbits the butler and my mother in the much cupboarded, white-painted, chintz-brightened housekeeper's room where the upper servants assembled, or of footmen and Rabbits and estate men of all sorts among the green baize and Windsor chairs of the pantry—where Rabbits, being above the law, sold beer without a licence or any compunction—or of housemaids and still-room maids in the bleak, matting-carpeted still-room, or of the cook and her kitchen-maids and

casual friends among the bright copper and hot glow of the kitchens.

Of course their own ranks and places came by implication to these people, and it was with the ranks and places of the Olympians that the talk mainly concerned itself. There was an old peerage and a Crockford together with the books of recipes, the "Whitaker's Almanack," the "Old Moore's Almanack," and the Eighteenth Century Dictionary, on the little dresser that broke the cupboards on one side of my mother's room; there was another peerage, with the covers off, in the pantry; there was a new peerage in the billiard-room, and I seem to remember another in the anomalous apartment that held the upper servants' bagatelle board, and in which, after the Hall dinner, they partook of the luxury of sweets. And if you had asked any of those upper servants how such and such a Prince of Battenberg was related to, let us say, Mr. Cunninghame Graham or the Duke of Argyle, you would have been told upon the nail. As a boy, I heard a great deal of that sort of thing, and if to this day I am still a little vague about courtesy titles and the exact application of honorifics, it is, I can assure you, because I hardened my heart, and not from any lack of adequate opportunity of mastering these succulent particulars.

Dominating all these memories is the figure of my mother—my mother who did not love me because I grew liker my father every day—and who knew with inflexible decision her place and the place of every one in the world—except the place that concealed my father—and in some details mine. Subtle points were put to her. I can see and hear her saying now, "No, Miss Fison, peers of England go in before peers of the United Kingdom, and he is merely a peer of the United Kingdom." She had much exercise in placing people's servants about her tea-table, where the etiquette was very strict. I wonder sometimes if the etiquette of housekeepers' rooms is as strict to-day, and what my mother would have made of a *chauffeur*. . . .

On the whole I am glad that I saw so much as I did of Bladesover—if for no other reason than because seeing it when I did, quite naïvely, believing in it thoroughly, and then coming to analyse it, has enabled me to understand much that would be absolutely incomprehensible in the structure of English society. Bladesover is, I am convinced, the clue to almost all that is distinctively British and perplexing to the foreign inquirer in England and the English-speaking peoples. Grasp firmly that England was all Bladesover two hundred years ago; that it has had Reform Acts indeed, and such-like changes of formula,

but no essential revolution since then ; that all that is modern and different has come in as a thing intruded or as a gloss upon this predominant formula, either impertinently or apologetically—and you will perceive at once the reasonableness, the necessity, of that snobbishness which is the distinctive quality of English thought. Everybody who is not actually in the shadow of a Bladesover is, as it were, perpetually seeking after lost orientations. We have never broken with our tradition, never even symbolically hewed it to pieces, as the French did in quivering fact in the Terror. But all the organising ideas have slackened, the old habitual bonds have relaxed or altogether come undone. And America too, is as it were a detached, outlying part of that estate which has expanded in queer ways. George Washington, Esquire, was of the gentlefolk, and he came near being a King. It was Plutarch, you know, and nothing intrinsically American that prevented George Washington being a King. . . .

§ 4

I hated tea-time in the housekeeper's room more than anything else at Bladesover. And more particularly I hated it when Mrs. Mackridge and Mrs. Booch and Mrs. Latude-Fernay were staying in the house. They were, all three of them, pensioned-off servants. Old friends of Lady Drew's had rewarded them posthumously for a prolonged devotion to their minor comforts, and Mrs. Booch was also trustee for a favourite Skye terrier. Every year Lady Drew gave them an invitation —a reward and encouragement of virtue with especial reference to my mother and Miss Fison, the maid. They sat about in black and shiny and flouncy clothing adorned with gimp and beads, eating great quantities of cake, drinking much tea in a stately manner and reverberating remarks.

I remember these women as immense. No doubt they were of negotiable size, but I was only a very little chap and they have assumed nightmare proportions in my mind. They loomed, they bulged, they impended. Mrs. Mackridge was large and dark ; there was a marvel about her head, inasmuch as she was bald. She wore a dignified cap, and in front of that upon her brow hair was *painted*. I have never seen the like since. She had been maid to the widow of Sir Roderick Blenderhasset Impey, some sort of governor or such-like potent in the East Indies, and from her remains—in Mrs. Mackridge—I judge Lady Impey was a very stupendous and crushing creature indeed. Lady Impey had been of the Juno type, haughty, unapproachable,

given to irony and a caustic wit. Mrs. Mackridge had no wit, but she had acquired the caustic voice and gestures along with the old satins and trimmings of the great lady. When she told you it was a fine morning, she seemed also to be telling you you were a fool and a low fool to boot; when she was spoken to, she had a way of acknowledging your poor tinkle of utterance with a voluminous, scornful "Haw!" that made you want to burn her alive. She also had a way of saying "Indade!" with a droop of the eyelids.

Mrs. Booch was a smaller woman, brown-haired, with queer little curls on either side of her face, large blue eyes and a small set of stereotyped remarks that constituted her entire mental range. Mrs. Latude-Fernay has left, oddly enough, no memory at all except her name and the effect of a green-grey silk dress, all set with gold and blue buttons. I fancy she was a large blonde. Then there was Miss Fison, the maid who served both Lady Drew and Miss Somerville, and at the end of the table, opposite my mother, sat Rabbits the butler. Rabbits, for a butler, was an unassuming man, and at tea he was not as you know butlers, but in a morning-coat and a black tie with blue spots. Still, he was large, with side-whiskers, even if his clean-shaven mouth was weak and little. I sat among these people on a high, hard, early Georgian chair, trying to exist, like a feeble seedling amidst great rocks, and my mother sat with an eye upon me, resolute to suppress the slightest manifestation of vitality. It was hard on me, but perhaps it was also hard upon these rather over-fed, ageing, pretending people, that my youthful restlessness and rebellious unbelieving eyes should be thrust in among their dignities.

Tea lasted for nearly three-quarters of an hour, and I sat it out perforce; and day after day the talk was exactly the same.

"Sugar, Mrs. Mackridge?" my mother used to ask. "Sugar, Mrs. Latude-Fernay?"

The word sugar would stir the mind of Mrs. Mackridge. "They say," she would begin, issuing her proclamation—at least half her sentences began "they say"—"sugar is fatt-an-ing, nowadays. Many of the best people do not take it now at all."

"Not with their tea, ma'am," said Rabbits, intelligently.

"Not with anaything," said Mrs. Mackridge, with an air of crushing repartee, and drank.

"What won't they say next?" said Miss Fison.

"They do say such things!" said Mrs. Booch.

"They say," said Mrs. Mackridge, inflexibly, "the doctors are not recomm-an-ding it now."

My Mother : "No, ma'am ?"

Mrs. Mackridge : "No, ma'am."

Then, to the table at large : "Poor Sir Roderick, before he died, consumed great quan-ta-ties of sugar. I have sometimes fancied it may have hastened his end."

This ended the first skirmish. A certain gloom of manner and a pause was considered due to the sacred memory of Sir Roderick.

"George," said my mother, "don't kick the chair !"

Then, perhaps, Mrs. Booch would produce a favourite piece from her *répertoire*. "The evenings are drawing out nicely," she would say, or if the season was decadent, "How the evenings draw in !" It was an invaluable remark to her ; I do not know how she would have got along without it.

My mother, who sat with her back to the window, would always consider it due to Mrs. Booch to turn about and regard the evening in the act of elongation or contraction, whichever phase it might be.

A brisk discussion of how long we were to the longest or shortest day would ensue, and die away at last exhausted.

Mrs. Mackridge, perhaps, would reopen. She had many intelligent habits ; among others she read the paper—the *Morning Post*. The other ladies would at times tackle that sheet, but only to read the births, marriages, and deaths on the front page. It was, of course, the old *Morning Post* that cost three-pence, not the brisk corruscating young thing of to-day. "They say," she would open, "that Lord Tweedums is to go to Canada."

"Ah !" said Mr. Rabbits ; "dew they ?"

"Isn't he," said my mother, "the Earl of Slumgold's cousin ?" She knew he was ; it was an entirely irrelevant and unnecessary remark, but still, something to say.

"The same, ma'am," said Mrs. Mackridge. "They say he was extremelay popular in New South Wales. They looked up to him greatlay. I knew him, ma'am, as a young man. A very nice pleasant young fella."

Interlude of respect.

"'Is predecessor," said Rabbits, who had acquired from some clerical model a precise emphatic articulation without acquiring at the same time the aspirates that would have graced it, "got into trouble at Sydney."

"Haw !" said Mrs. Mackridge, scornfully, "so I am tawled."

"'E came to Templemorton after 'e came back, and I remember them talking 'im over after 'e'd gone again."

"Haw ?" said Mrs. Mackridge, interrogatively.

"'*Is* fuss was quotin' poetry, ma'am. 'E said—what was it 'e said—'They lef' their country for their country's good,' which in some way was took to remind them of their being originally convic's, though now reformed. Every one I 'eard speak, agreed it was takless of 'im."

"Sir Roderick used to say," said Mrs. Mackridge, "that the First Thing"—here Mrs. Mackridge paused and looked dreadfully at me—"and the Second Thing"—here she fixed me again—"and the Third Thing"—now I was released—"needed in a colonial governor is Tact." She became aware of my doubts again, and added predominantly, "It has always struck me that that was a Singularly True Remark."

I resolved that if ever I found this polypus of Tact growing up in my soul, I would tear it out by the roots, throw it forth and stamp on it.

"They're queer people—colonials," said Rabbits, "very queer. When I was at Templemorton I see something ov 'em. Queer fellows, some of 'em. Very respectful of course, free with their money in a spasammy sort of way, but—— Some of 'em, I must confess, make me nervous. They have an eye on you. They watch you—as you wait. They let themselves appear to be lookin' at you . . ."

My mother said nothing in that discussion. The word "colonies" always upset her. She was afraid, I think, that if she turned her mind in that direction my errant father might suddenly and shockingly be discovered, no doubt conspicuously bigamic and altogether offensive and revolutionary. She did not want to rediscover my father at all.

It is curious that when I was a little listening boy I had such an idea of our colonies that I jeered in my heart at Mrs. Mackridge's colonial ascendancy. These brave emancipated sunburnt English of the open, I thought, suffer these aristocratic invaders as a quaint anachronism, but as for being gratified——!

I don't jeer now. I'm not so sure.

§ 5

It is a little difficult to explain why I did not come to do what was the natural thing for any one in my circumstances to do, and take my world for granted. A certain innate scepticism, I think, explains it—and a certain inaptitude for sympathetic assimilation. My father, I believe, was a sceptic; my mother was certainly a hard woman.

I was an only child, and to this day I do not know whether

my father is living or dead. He fled my mother's virtues before my distincter memories began. He left no traces in his flight, and she, in her indignation, destroyed every vestige that she could of him. Never a photograph nor a scrap of his handwriting have I seen ; and it was, I know, only the accepted code of virtue and discretion that prevented her destroying her marriage certificate and me, and so making a clean sweep of her matrimonial humiliation. I suppose I must inherit something of the moral stupidity that could enable her to make a holocaust of every little personal thing she had of him. There must have been presents made by him as a lover, for example, books with kindly inscriptions, letters perhaps, a flattened flower, a ring, or such-like gage. She kept her wedding-ring of course, but all the others she destroyed. She never told me his christian name or indeed spoke a word to me of him, though at times I came near daring to ask her ; and what I have of him—it isn't much—I got from his brother, my hero, my Uncle Ponderevo. She wore her ring ; her marriage certificate she kept in a sealed envelope in the very bottom of her largest trunk, and me she sustained at a private school among the Kentish hills. You must not think I was always at Bladesover—even in my holidays. If at the time these came round, Lady Drew was vexed by recent Company, or for any other reason wished to take it out of my mother, then she used to ignore the customary reminder my mother gave her and I " stayed on " at the school.

But such occasions were rare, and I suppose that between ten and fourteen I averaged fifty days a year at Bladesover.

Don't imagine I deny that was a fine thing for me. Bladesover, in absorbing the whole countryside, had not altogether missed greatness. The Bladesover system has at least done one good thing for England, it has abolished the peasant habit of mind. If many of us still live and breathe pantry and housekeeper's room, we are quit of the dream of living by economising parasitically on hens and pigs. . . . About that park there were some elements of a liberal education ; there was a great space of greensward not given over to manure and food-grubbing ; there was mystery, there was matter for the imagination. It was still a park of deer. I saw something of the life of these dappled creatures, heard the belling of stags, came upon young fawns among the bracken, found bones, skulls and antlers in lonely places. There were corners that gave a gleam of meaning to the word forest, glimpses of unstudied natural splendour. There was a slope of bluebells in the broken sunlight under the newly green beeches in the west wood that is now precious

sapphire in my memory; it was the first time that I knowingly met Beauty.

And in the house there were books. The rubbish old Lady Drew read I never saw; stuff of the Maria Monk type, I have since gathered, had a fascination for her; but back in the past there had been a Drew of intellectual enterprise, Sir Cuthbert, the son of Sir Matthew who built the house; and thrust away, neglected and despised, in an old room upstairs, were books and treasures of his that my mother let me rout among during a spell of wintry wet. Sitting under a dormer window on a shelf above great stores of tea and spices, I became familiar with much of Hogarth in a big portfolio, with Raphael—there was a great book of engravings from the stanzas of Raphael in the Vatican—and with most of the capitals of Europe as they had looked about 1780, by means of several big iron-moulded books of views. There was also a broad eighteenth-century atlas with huge wandering maps that instructed me mightily. It had splendid adornments about each map title; Holland showed a fisherman and his boat; Russia a Cossack; Japan, remarkable people attired in pagodas—I say it deliberately, "pagodas." There were *terræ incognitæ* in every continent then, Poland, Sarmatia, lands since lost; and many a voyage I made with a blunted pin about that large, incorrect and dignified world. The books in that little old closet had been banished, I suppose, from the saloon during the Victorian revival of good taste and emasculated orthodoxy, but my mother had no suspicion of their character. So I read and understood the good sound rhetoric of Tom Paine's "Rights of Man," and his "Common Sense," excellent books, once praised by bishops and since sedulously lied about. Gulliver was there unexpurgated, strong meat for a boy perhaps, but not too strong I hold—I have never regretted that I escaped niceness in these affairs. The satire of Traldragdubh made my blood boil as it was meant to do, but I hated Swift for the Houyhnhnms and never quite liked a horse afterwards. Then I remember also a translation of Voltaire's "Candide," and "Rasselas"; and, vast book though it was, I really believe I read, in a muzzy sort of way of course, from end to end, and even with some reference now and then to the Atlas, Gibbon—in twelve volumes.

These readings whetted my taste for more, and surreptitiously I raided the bookcases in the big saloon. I got through quite a number of books before my sacrilegious temerity was discovered by Anne, the old head-housemaid. I remember that among others I tried a translation of Plato's "Republic"

then, and found extraordinarily little interest in it ; I was much too young for that ; but "Vathek"—"Vathek" was glorious stuff. That kicking affair ! When everybody *had* to kick !

The thought of "Vathek" always brings back with it my boyish memory of the big saloon at Bladesover.

It was a huge long room with many windows opening upon the park, and each window—there were a dozen or more reaching from the floor up—had its elaborate silk or satin curtains, heavily fringed, a canopy (is it ?) above, its complex white shutters folding into the deep thickness of the wall. At either end of that great still place was an immense marble chimney-piece ; the end by the bookcase showed the wolf and Romulus and Remus, with Homer and Virgil for supporters ; the design of the other end I have forgotten. Frederick, Prince of Wales, swaggered flatly over the one, twice life-size, but mellowed by the surface gleam of oil ; and over the other was an equally colossal group of departed Drews as sylvan deities, scantily clad, against a storm-rent sky. Down the centre of the elaborate ceiling were three chandeliers, each bearing some hundreds of dangling glass lustres, and over the interminable carpet—it impressed me as about as big as Sarmatia in the storeroom Atlas—were islands and archipelagoes of chintz-covered chairs and couches, tables, great Sèvres vases on pedestals, a bronze man and horse. Somewhere in this wilderness one came, I remember, upon a big harp beside a lyre-shaped music-stand, and a grand piano. . . .

The book-borrowing raid was one of extraordinary dash and danger. One came down the main service stairs—that was legal, and illegality began in a little landing when, very cautiously, one went through a red baize door. A little passage led to the hall, and here one reconnoitred for Ann, the old head-housemaid—the younger housemaids were friendly and did not count. Ann located, came a dash across the open space at the foot of that great staircase that has never been properly descended since powder went out of fashion, and so to the saloon door. A beast of an oscillating Chinaman in china, as large as life, grimaced and quivered to one's lightest steps. That door was the perilous place ; it was double, with the thickness of the wall between, so that one could not listen beforehand for the whisk of the feather-brush on the other side. Oddly rat-like, is it not, this darting into enormous places in pursuit of the abandoned crumbs of thought ?

And I found Langhorne's "Plutarch" too, I remember, on those shelves. It seems queer to me now to think that I acquired

pride and self-respect, the idea of a state and the germ of public spirit, in such a furtive fashion; queer, too, that it should rest with an old Greek, dead these eighteen hundred years, to teach me that.

§ 6

The school I went to was the sort of school the Bladesover system permitted. The public schools that had come into existence in the brief glow of the Renascence had been taken possession of by the ruling class; the lower classes were not supposed to stand in need of schools, and our middle stratum got the schools it deserved, private schools, schools any unqualified pretender was free to establish. Mine was kept by a man who had had the energy to get himself a College of Preceptors diploma, and considering how cheap his charges were, I will readily admit the place might have been worse. The building was a dingy yellow-brick residence outside the village, with the school-room as an outbuilding of lath and plaster.

I do not remember that my school-days were unhappy—indeed I recall a good lot of fine mixed fun in them—but I cannot without grave risk of misinterpretation declare that we were at all nice and refined. We fought much, not sound formal fighting but "scrapping" of a sincere and murderous kind, into which one might bring one's boots—it made us tough at any rate—and several of us were the sons of London publicans, who distinguished "scraps" where one meant to hurt from ordered pugilism, practising both arts, and having, moreover, precocious linguistic gifts. Our cricket-field was bald about the wickets, and we played without style and disputed with the umpire; and the teaching was chiefly in the hands of a lout of nineteen, who wore ready-made clothes and taught despicably. The headmaster and proprietor taught us arithmetic, algebra, and Euclid, and to the older boys even trigonometry, himself; he had a strong mathematical bias, and I think now that by the standard of a British public school he did rather well by us.

We had one inestimable privilege at that school, and that was spiritual neglect. We dealt with one another with the forcible simplicity of natural boys, we "cheeked," and "punched" and "clouted;" we thought ourselves Red Indians and cowboys and such like honourable things, and not young English gentlemen; we never felt the strain of "Onward Christian Soldiers," nor were swayed by any premature piety in the cold oak pew of our Sunday devotions. All that was good. We

spent our rare pennies on the uncensored reading-matter of the village dame's shop, on the *Boys of England* and honest penny dreadfuls—ripping stuff, stuff that anticipated Haggard and Stevenson, badly printed and queerly illustrated, and very very good for us. On our half-holidays we were allowed the unusual freedom of rambling in twos and threes wide and far about the land, talking experimentally, dreaming wildly. There was much in those walks ! To this day the landscape of the Kentish weald, with its low broad distances, its hop gardens and golden stretches of wheat, its oasts and square church towers, its background of downland and hangers, has for me a faint sense of adventure added to the pleasure of its beauty. We smoked on occasion, but nobody put us up to the proper " boyish " things to do ; we never " robbed an orchard " for example, though there were orchards all about us, we thought stealing was sinful, we stole incidental apples and turnips and strawberries from the fields indeed, but in a criminal inglorious fashion, and afterwards we were ashamed. We had our days of adventure, but they were natural accidents, our own adventures. There was one hot day when several of us, walking out towards Maidstone, were incited by the devil to despise ginger-beer, and we fuddled ourselves dreadfully with ale ; and a time when our young minds were infected to the pitch of buying pistols, by the legend of the Wild West. Young Roots from Highbury came back with a revolver and cartridges, and we went off six strong to live a free wild life one holiday afternoon. We fired our first shot deep in the old flint-mine at Chiselstead, and nearly burst our ear-drums ; then we fired in a primrose-studded wood by Pickthorn Green, and I gave a false alarm of " keeper," and we fled in disorder for a mile. After which Roots suddenly shot at a pheasant in the high road by Chiselstead, and then young Barker told lies about the severity of the game laws and made Roots sore afraid, and we hid the pistol in a dry ditch outside the school field. A day or so after we got it again, and ignoring a certain fouling and rusting of the barrel, tried for a rabbit at three hundred yards. Young Roots blew a molehill at twenty paces into a dust-cloud, burnt his fingers, and scorched his face ; and the weapon having once displayed this strange disposition to flame back upon the shooter was not subsequently fired.

One main source of excitement for us was " cheeking " people in vans and carts upon the Goudhurst road ; and getting myself into a monstrous white mess in the chalk-pits beyond the village, and catching yellow jaundice as a sequel to bathing

stark naked with three other Adamites, old Ewart leading that function in the rivulet across Hickson's meadows, are among my *memorabilia*. Those free imaginative afternoons! how much they were for us! how much they did for us! All streams came from the then undiscovered "sources of the Nile" in those days, all thickets were Indian jungles, and our best game, I say it with pride, I invented. I got it out of the Bladesover saloon. We found a wood where "Trespassing" was forbidden, and did the "Retreat of the Ten Thousand" through it from end to end, cutting our way bravely through a host of nettle-beds that barred our path, and not forgetting to weep and kneel when at last we emerged within sight of the High Road Sea. So we have burst at times, weeping and rejoicing, upon startled wayfarers. Usually I took the part of that distinguished general Xenōphon —and please note the quantity of the ō. I have all my classical names like that—Socrates rhymes with Bates for me, and except when the bleak eye of some scholar warns me of his standards of judgment, I use those dear old mispronunciations still. The little splash into Latin made during my days as a chemist washed off nothing of the habit. Well—if I met those great gentlemen of the past with their accents carelessly adjusted I did at least meet them alive, as an equal, and in a living tongue. Altogether my school might easily have been worse for me, and among other good things it gave me a friend who has lasted my life out.

This was Ewart, who is now a monumental artist at Woking, after many vicissitudes. Dear chap, how he did stick out of his clothes to be sure! He was a long-limbed lout, ridiculously tall beside my more youthful compactness, and, except that there was no black moustache under his nose-blob, he had the same round knobby face he has to-day, the same bright and active hazel-brown eyes, the stare, the meditative moment, the insinuating reply. Surely no boy ever played the fool as Bob Ewart used to play it, no boy had a readier knack of mantling the world with wonder. Commonness vanished before Ewart, at his expository touch all things became memorable and rare. From him I first heard tell of love, but only after its barbs were already sticking in my heart. He was, I know now, the bastard of that great improvident artist, Rickmann Ewart; he brought the light of a lax world that at least had not turned its back upon beauty, into the growing fermentation of my mind.

I won his heart by a version of "Vathek," and after that we were inseparable yarning friends. We merged our intellectual

stock so completely that I wonder sometimes how much I did not become Ewart, how much Ewart is not vicariously and derivatively me. . . .

§ 7

And then, when I had newly passed my fourteenth birthday, came my tragic disgrace.

It was in my midsummer holidays that the thing happened, and it was through the Honourable Beatrice Normandy. She had "come into my life," as they say, before I was twelve.

She descended unexpectedly into a peaceful interlude that followed the annual going of those Three Great Women. She came into the old nursery upstairs, and every day she had tea with us in the housekeeper's room. She was eight, and she came with a nurse called Nannie; and to begin with, I did not like her at all.

Nobody liked this irruption into the downstairs rooms; the two "gave trouble"—a dire offence; Nannie's sense of duty to her charge led to requests and demands that took my mother's breath away. Eggs at unusual times, the reboiling of milk, the rejection of an excellent milk pudding—not negotiated respectfully but dictated as of right. Nannie was a dark, long-featured, taciturn woman in a grey dress, she had a furtive inflexibility of manner that finally dismayed and crushed and overcame. She conveyed she was "under orders"—like a Greek tragedy. She was that strange product of the old time, a devoted, trusted servant; she had, as it were, banked all her pride and will with the greater, more powerful people who employed her, in return for a life-long security of servitude—the bargain was none the less binding for being implicit. Finally they were to pension her, and she would die the hated treasure of a boarding-house. She had built up in herself an enormous habit of reference to these upstairs people, she had curbed down all discordant murmurings of her soul, her very instincts were perverted or surrendered. She was sexless, her personal pride was all transferred, she mothered another woman's child with a hard, joyless devotion that was at last entirely compatible with a stoical separation. She treated us all as things that counted for nothing save to fetch and carry for her charge. But the Honourable Beatrice could condescend.

The queer chances of later years come between me and a distinctly separated memory of that childish face. When I think of Beatrice, I think of her as I came to know her at a later time, when at last I came to know her so well that indeed now I

could draw her, and show a hundred littl 'delicate things you would miss in looking at her. But even then I remember how I noted the infinite delicacy of her childish skin and the fine eyebrow, finer than the finest feather that ever one felt on the breast of a bird. She was one of those elfin, rather precocious little girls, quick coloured, with dark hair, naturally curling dusky hair that was sometimes astray over her eyes, and eyes that were sometimes impishly dark, and sometimes a clear brown yellow. And from the very outset, after a most cursory attention to Rabbits, she decided that the only really interesting thing at the tea-table was myself.

The elders talked in their formal dull way—telling Nannie the trite old things about the park and the village that they told every one, and Beatrice watched me across the table with a pitiless little curiosity that made me uncomfortable.

"Nannie," she said pointing, and Nannie left a question of my mother's disregarded to attend to her; "is he a servant-boy?"

"S-s-sh," said Nannie. "He's Master Ponderevo."

"Is he a servant-boy?" repeated Beatrice.

"He's a school-boy," said my mother.

"Then may I talk to him, Nannie?"

Nannie surveyed me with brutal inhumanity. "You mustn't talk too much," she said to her charge, and cut cake into fingers for her. "No," she added decisively, as Beatrice made to speak.

Beatrice became malignant. Her eyes explored me with unjustifiable hostility. "He's got dirty hands," she said, stabbing at the forbidden fruit. "And there's a fray to his collar."

Then she gave herself up to cake with an appearance of entire forgetfulness of me that filled me with hate and a passionate desire to compel her to admire me. . . . And the next day before tea, I did for the first time in my life, freely, without command or any compulsion, wash my hands.

So our acquaintance began, and presently was deepened by a whim of hers. She had a cold and was kept indoors, and confronted Nannie suddenly with the alternative of being hopelessly naughty, which in her case involved a generous amount of screaming unsuitable for the ears of an elderly, shaky, rich aunt, or having me up to the nursery to play with her all the afternoon. Nannie came downstairs and borrowed me in a careworn manner, and I was handed over to the little creature as if I was some large variety of kitten. I had never had anything

to do with a little girl before, I thought she was more beautiful and wonderful and bright than anything else could possibly be in life, and she found me the gentlest of slaves—though at the same time, as I made evident, fairly strong. And Nannie was amazed to find the afternoon slip cheerfully and rapidly away. She praised my manners to Lady Drew and to my mother, who said she was glad to hear well of me, and after that I played with Beatrice several times. The toys she had remain in my memory still as great splendid things, gigantic to all my previous experience of toys, and we even went to the great doll's house on the nursery landing to play discreetly with that, the great doll's house that the Prince Regent had given Sir Harry Drew's first-born (who died at five), that was a not ineffectual model of Bladesover itself, and contained eighty-five dolls and had cost hundreds of pounds. I played under imperious direction with that toy of glory.

I went back to school when that holiday was over, dreaming of beautiful things, and got Ewart to talk to me of love; and I made a great story out of the doll's house, a story that, taken over into Ewart's hands, speedily grew to an island doll's city all our own.

One of the dolls, I privately decided, was like Beatrice.

One other holiday there was when I saw something of her—oddly enough my memory of that second holiday in which she played a part is vague—and then came a gap of a year, and then my disgrace.

§ 8

Now I sit down to write my story and tell over again things in their order, I find for the first time how inconsecutive and irrational a thing the memory can be. One recalls acts and cannot recall motives; one recalls quite vividly moments that stand out inexplicably—things adrift, joining on to nothing, leading nowhere. I think I must have seen Beatrice and her half-brother quite a number of times in my last holiday at Bladesover, but I really cannot recall more than a little of the quality of the circumstances. That great crisis of my boyhood stands out very vividly as an effect, as a sort of cardinal thing for me, but when I look for details—particularly details that led up to the crisis—I cannot find them in any developing order at all. This half-brother, Archie Garvell, was a new factor in the affair. I remember him clearly as a fair-haired, supercilious-looking, weedily-lank boy, much taller than I but I should imagine very little heavier, and that we hated each other by a sort of instinct

from the beginning ; and yet I cannot remember my first meeting with him at all.

Looking back into these past things—it is like rummaging in a neglected attic that has experienced the attentions of some whimsical robber—I cannot even account for the presence of these children at Bladesover. They were, I know, among the innumerable cousins of Lady Drew, and according to the theories of downstairs, candidates for the ultimate possession of Bladesover. If they were, their candidature was unsuccessful. But that great place, with all its faded splendour, its fine furniture, its large traditions, was entirely at the old lady's disposition ; and I am inclined to think it is true that she used this fact to torment and dominate a number of eligible people. Lord Osprey was among the number of these, and she showed these hospitalities to his motherless child and stepchild partly, no doubt, because he was poor, but quite as much, I nowadays imagine, in the dim hope of finding some affectionate or imaginative outcome of contact with them. Nannie had dropped out of the world this second time, and Beatrice was in the charge of an extremely amiable and ineffectual poor army-class young woman whose name I never knew. They were, I think, two remarkably ill-managed and enterprising children. I seem to remember, too, that it was understood that I was not a fit companion for them, and that our meetings had to be as unostentatious as possible. It was Beatrice who insisted upon our meeting.

I am certain I knew quite a lot about love at fourteen, and that I was quite as much in love with Beatrice then as any impassioned adult could be, and that Beatrice was, in her way, in love with me. It is part of the decent and useful pretences of our world that children of the age at which we were think nothing, feel nothing, know nothing of love. It is wonderful what people the English are for keeping up pretences. But indeed I cannot avoid telling that Beatrice and I talked of love and kissed and embraced one another.

I recall something of one talk under the overhanging bushes of the shrubbery—I on the park side of the stone wall, and the lady of my worship a little inelegantly astride thereon. Inelegantly do I say ? You should have seen the sweet imp as I remember her. Just her poise on the wall comes suddenly clear before me, and behind her the light various branches of the bushes of the shrubbery that my feet might not profane, and far away and high behind her, dim and stately, the cornice of the great façade of Bladesover rose against the dappled sky. Our

talk must have been serious and businesslike, for we were discussing my social position.

"I don't love Archie," she had said, *à propos* of nothing; and then in a whisper, leaning forward with the hair about her face, "I love *you!*"

But she had been a little pressing to have it clear that I was not and could not be a servant.

"You'll never be a servant—ever!"

I swore that very readily, and it is a vow I have kept by nature.

"What will you be?" said she.

I ran my mind hastily over the professions.

"Will you be a soldier?" she asked.

"And be bawled at by duffers? No fear!" said I. "Leave that to the plough-boys."

"But an officer?"

"I don't know," I said, evading a shameful difficulty. "I'd rather go into the navy."

"Wouldn't you like to fight?"

"I'd like to fight," I said. "But a common soldier—it's no honour to have to be told to fight and to be looked down upon while you do it, and how could I be an officer?"

"Couldn't you be?" she said, and looked at me doubtfully; and the spaces of the social system opened between us.

Then, as became a male of spirit, I took upon myself to brag and lie my way through this trouble. I said I was a poor man, and poor men went into the navy; that I "knew" mathematics, which no army officer did; and I claimed Nelson for an exemplar, and spoke very highly of my outlook upon blue water. "He loved Lady Hamilton," I said, "although she *was* a lady—and I will love you."

We were somewhere near that when the egregious governess became audible, calling "Beeee-âtrice! Beeee-e-e-âtrice!"

"Snifty beast!" said my lady, and tried to get on with the conversation; but that governess made things impossible.

"Come here!" said my lady suddenly, holding out a grubby hand; and I went very close to her, and she put her little head down upon the wall until her black fog of hair tickled my cheek.

"You are my humble, faithful lover?" she demanded in a whisper, her warm flushed face near touching mine, and her eyes very dark and lustrous.

"I am your humble, faithful lover," I whispered back.

And she put her arm about my head and put out her lips,

and we kissed, and boy though I was, I was all a-tremble. So we two kissed for the first time.

"*Beeee-e-e*-â-trice!"—fearfully close.

My lady had vanished, with one wild kick of her black-stockinged leg. A moment after, I heard her sustaining the reproaches of her governess, and explaining her failure to answer with an admirable lucidity and disingenuousness.

I felt it was unnecessary for me to be seen just then, and I vanished guiltily round the corner into the West Wood, and so to love-dreams and single-handed play, wandering along one of those meandering bracken valleys that varied Bladesover park. And that day and for many days that kiss upon my lips was a seal, and by night the seed of dreams.

Then I remember an expedition we made—she, I, and her half-brother—into those West Woods—they two were supposed to be playing in the shrubbery—and how we were Indians there and made a wigwam out of a pile of beech logs, and how we stalked deer, crept near and watched rabbits feeding in a glade, and almost got a squirrel. It was play seasoned with plentiful disputing between me and young Garvell, for each firmly insisted upon the leading *rôles*, and only my wider reading—I had read ten stories to his one—gave me the ascendency over him. Also I scored over him by knowing how to find the eagle in a bracken stem. And somehow—I don't remember what led to it at all—I and Beatrice, two hot and ruffled creatures, crept in among the tall bracken and hid from him. The great fronds rose above us, five feet or more, and as I had learnt how to wriggle through that undergrowth with the minimum of betrayal by tossing greenery above, I led the way. The ground under bracken is beautifully clear and faintly scented in warm weather; the stems come up black and then green; if you crawl flat, it is a tropical forest in miniature. I led the way and Beatrice crawled behind, and then as the green of the further glade opened before us, stopped. She crawled up to me, her hot little face came close to mine; once more she looked and breathed close to me, and suddenly she flung her arm about my neck and dragged me to earth beside her, and kissed me and kissed me again. We kissed, we embraced and kissed again, all without a word; we desisted, we stared and hesitated—then in a suddenly damped mood and a little perplexed at ourselves, crawled out to be presently run down and caught in the tamest way by Archie.

That comes back very clearly to me, and other vague memories—I know old Hall and his gun out shooting at jackdaws,

came into our common experiences, but I don't remember how ; and then at last, abruptly, our fight in the Warren stands out. The Warren, like most places in England that have that name, was not particularly a warren, it was a long slope of thorns and beeches through which a path ran, and made an alternative route to the downhill carriage road between Bladesover and Ropedean. I don't know how we three got there, but I have an uncertain fancy it was connected with a visit paid by the governess to the Ropedean vicarage people. But suddenly Archie and I, in discussing a game, fell into a dispute for Beatrice. I had made him the fairest offer ; I was to be a Spanish nobleman, she was to be my wife, and he was to be a tribe of Indians trying to carry her off. It seems to me a fairly attractive offer to a boy to be a whole tribe of Indians with a chance of such a booty. But Archie suddenly took offence.

"No," he said ; "we can't have that ! "

"Can't have what ? "

"You can't be a gentleman, because you aren't. And you can't play Beatrice is your wife. It's—it's impertinent."

"But——" I said, and looked at her.

Some earlier grudge in the day's affair must have been in Archie's mind. "We let you play with us," said Archie ; "but we can't have things like that."

"What rot ! " said Beatrice. "He can if he likes."

But he carried his point. I let him carry it, and only began to grow angry three or four minutes later. Then we were still discussing play and disputing about another game. Nothing seemed right for all of us.

"We don't want you to play with us at all," said Archie.

"Yes, we do," said Beatrice.

"He drops his aitches like anything."

"No, 'E doesn't," said I, in the heat of the moment.

"There you go ! " he cried. "'E, he says. 'E ! 'E ! 'E ! "

He pointed a finger at me. He had struck to the heart of my shame. I made the only possible reply by a rush at him. "Hello ! " he cried at my blackavised attack. He dropped back into an attitude that had some style in it, parried my blow, got back at my cheek, and laughed with surprise and relief at his own success. Whereupon I became a thing of murderous rage. He could box as well or better than I—he had yet to realise I knew anything of that at all—but I had fought once or twice to a finish with bare fists, I was used to inflicting and enduring savage hurting, and I doubt if he had ever fought. I hadn't fought ten seconds before I felt this softness in him, realised all that quality

of modern upper-class England that never goes to the quick, that hedges about rules and those petty points of honour that are the ultimate comminution of honour, that claims credit for things demonstrably half done. He seemed to think that first hit of his and one or two others were going to matter, that I ought to give in when presently my lip bled and dripped blood upon my clothes. So before we had been at it a minute he had ceased to be aggressive except in momentary spurts, and I was knocking him about almost as I wanted to do, and demanding breathlessly and fiercely, after our school manner, whether he had had enough, not knowing that by his high code and his soft training it was equally impossible for him to either buck up and beat me, or give in.

I have a very distinct impression of Beatrice dancing about us during the affair in a state of unladylike appreciation, but I was too preoccupied to hear much of what she was saying. But she certainly backed us both, and I am inclined to think now—it may be the disillusionment of my ripened years—whichever she thought was winning.

Then young Garvell, giving way before my slogging, stumbled and fell over a big flint, and I, still following the tradition of my class and school, promptly flung myself on him to finish him. We were busy with each other on the ground when we became aware of a dreadful interruption.

"Shut up, you *fool!*" said Archie.

"Oh, Lady Drew!" I heard Beatrice cry. "They're fighting! They're fighting something awful!"

I looked over my shoulder. Archie's wish to get up became irresistible, and my resolve to go on with him vanished altogether.

I became aware of the two old ladies, presences of black and purple silk and fur and shining dark things; they had walked up through the Warren, while the horses took the hill easily, and so had come upon us. Beatrice had gone to them at once with an air of taking refuge, and stood beside and a little behind them. We both rose dejectedly. The two old ladies were evidently quite dreadfully shocked, and peering at us with their poor old eyes; and never had I seen such a tremblement in Lady Drew's lorgnettes.

"You've never been fighting?" said Lady Drew. "You have been fighting."

"It wasn't proper fighting," snapped Archie, with accusing eyes on me.

"It's Mrs. Ponderevo's George!" said Miss Somerville, so adding a conviction for ingratitude to my evident sacrilege.

"How could he *dare?*" cried Lady Drew, becoming very awful.

"He broke the rules," said Archie, sobbing for breath. "I slipped, and—he hit me while I was down. He knelt on me."

"How could you *dare?*" said Lady Drew.

I produced an experienced handkerchief rolled up into a tight ball, and wiped the blood from my chin, but I offered no explanation of my daring. Among other things that prevented that, I was too short of breath.

"He didn't fight fair," sobbed Archie. . . .

Beatrice, from behind the old ladies, regarded me intently and without hostility. I am inclined to think the modification of my face through the damage to my lip interested her. It became dimly apparent to my confused intelligence that I must not say these two had been playing with me. That would not be after the rules of their game. I resolved in this difficult situation upon a sulky silence, and to take whatever consequences might follow.

§ 9

The powers of justice in Bladesover made an extraordinary mess of my case.

I have regretfully to admit that the Honourable Beatrice Normandy did, at the age of ten, betray me, abandon me, and lie most abominably about me. She was, as a matter of fact, panic-stricken about me, conscience-stricken too; she bolted from the very thought of my being her affianced lover and so forth, from the faintest memory of kissing; she was indeed altogether disgraceful and human in her betrayal. She and her half-brother lied in perfect concord, and I was presented as a wanton assailant of my social betters. They were waiting about in the Warren, when I came up and spoke to them, &c.

On the whole, I now perceive Lady Drew's decisions were, in the light of the evidence, reasonable and merciful.

They were conveyed to me by my mother, who was, I really believe, even more shocked by the grossness of my social insubordination than Lady Drew. She dilated on her ladyship's kindnesses to me, on the effrontery and wickedness of my procedure, and so came at last to the terms of my penance. "You must go up to young Mr. Garvell, and beg his pardon."

"I won't beg his pardon," I said, speaking for the first time.

My mother paused incredulous.

I folded my arms on her table-cloth, and delivered my wicked little ultimatum. "I won't beg his pardon nohow," I said. "See?"

"Then you will have to go off to your Uncle Frapp at Chatham."

"I don't care where I have to go or what I have to do, I won't beg his pardon," I said.

And I didn't.

After that I was one against the world. Perhaps in my mother's heart there lurked some pity for me, but she did not show it. She took the side of the young gentleman; she tried hard, she tried very hard, to make me say I was sorry I had struck him. Sorry!

I couldn't explain.

So I went into exile in the dog-cart to Redwood station, with Jukes the coachman, coldly silent, driving me, and all my personal belongings in a small American-cloth portmanteau behind.

I felt I had much to embitter me; the game had not the beginnings of fairness by any standards I knew. . . . But the thing that embittered me most was that the Honourable Beatrice Normandy should have repudiated and fled from me as though I was some sort of leper, and not even have taken a chance or so to give me a good-bye. She might have done that anyhow! Supposing I had told on her! But the son of a servant counts as a servant. She had forgotten and now remembered. . . .

I solaced myself with some extraordinary dream of coming back to Bladesover, stern, powerful, after the fashion of Coriolanus. I do not recall the details, but I have no doubt I displayed great magnanimity. . . .

Well, anyhow I never said I was sorry for pounding young Garvell, and I am not sorry to this day.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

OF MY LAUNCH INTO THE WORLD AND THE LAST I SAW OF BLADESOVER

§ 1

When I was thus banished from Bladesover House, as it was then thought for good and all, I was sent by my mother in a vindictive spirit, first to her cousin, Nicodemus Frapp, and then, as a fully indentured apprentice, to my Uncle Ponderevo.

TONO-BUNGAY

I ran away from the care of my Cousin Nicodemus back to Bladesover House.

My cousin, Nicodemus Frapp, was a baker in a back street—a slum rather—just off that miserable, narrow, mean high road that threads those exquisite beads, Rochester and Chatham. He was, I must admit, a shock to me, much dominated by a young, plump, prolific, malingering wife ; a bent, slow-moving, unwilling dark man, with flour in his hair and eyelashes, in the lines of his face and the seams of his coat. I've never had a chance to correct my early impression of him, and he still remains an almost dreadful memory, a sort of caricature of incompetent simplicity. As I remember him, indeed, he presented the servile tradition perfected. He had no pride in his person, fine clothes and dressing up wasn't "for the likes of" him, so that he got his wife, who was no artist at it, to cut his black hair at irregular intervals, and let his nails become disagreeable to the fastidious eye ; he had no pride in his business nor any initiative, his only virtues were not doing certain things and hard work. "Your uncle," said my mother—all grown-up cousins were uncles by courtesy among the Victorian middle class—"isn't much to look at or talk to, but he's a Good Hard-Working Man." There was a sort of base honourableness about toil, however needless, in that system of inversion. Another point of honour was to rise at or before dawn, and then laboriously muddle about. It was very distinctly impressed on my mind that the Good Hard-Working Man would have thought it "fal-lallish" to own a pocket-handkerchief. Poor old Frapp—dirty and crushed by-product of Bladesover's magnificence ! He made no fight against the world at all, he was floundering in small debts that were not so small but that finally they overwhelmed him, whenever there was occasion for any exertion his wife fell back upon pains and her "condition," and God sent them many children, most of whom died, and so, by their coming and going, gave a double exercise in the virtues of submission.

Resignation to God's will was the common device of these people in the face of every duty and every emergency. There were no books in the house. I doubt if either of them had retained the capacity for reading consecutively for more than a minute or so, and it was with amazement that day after day, over and above stale bread, one beheld food and again more food amidst the litter that held permanent session on the living-room table.

One might have doubted if either of them felt discomfort

in this dusty darkness of existence, if it was not that they did visibly seek consolation. They sought this and found it of a Sunday, not in strong drink and raving but in imaginary draughts of blood. They met with twenty or thirty other darkened and unclean people, all dressed in dingy colours that would not show the dirt, in a little brick-coloured chapel equipped with a spavined roarer of a harmonium, and there solaced their minds on the thought that all that was fair and free in life, all that struggled, all that planned and made, all pride and beauty and honour, all fine and enjoyable things, were irrevocably damned to everlasting torments. They were the self-appointed confidants of God's mockery of his own creation. So at any rate they stick in my mind. Vaguer, and yet hardly less agreeable than this cosmic jest, this coming "Yah, clever!" and general serving out and "showing up" of the lucky, the bold, and the cheerful, was their own predestination to Glory.

"There is a Fountain, filled with Blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's Veins,"

so they sang. I hear the drone and wheeze of that hymn now. I hated them with the bitter uncharitable condemnation of boyhood, and a twinge of that hate comes back to me. As I write the words, the sounds and then the scene return, these obscure, undignified people, a fat woman with asthma, an old Welsh milk-seller with a tumour on his bald head, who was the intellectual leader of the sect, a huge-voiced haberdasher with a big black beard, a white-faced, extraordinarily pregnant woman, his wife, a spectacled rate-collector with a bent back. . . . I hear the talk about souls, the strange battered old phrases that were coined ages ago in the seaports of the sun-dry Levant, of balm of Gilead and manna in the desert, of gourds that give shade and water in a thirsty land; I recall again the way in which at the conclusion of the service the talk remained pious in form but became medical in substance, and how the women got together for obstetric whisperings. I, as a boy, did not matter and might overhear. . . .

If Bladesover is my key for the explanation of England, I think my invincible persuasion that I understand Russia was engendered by the circle of Uncle Frapp.

I slept in a dingy sheeted bed with the two elder survivors of Frapp fecundity, and spent my week-days in helping in the laborious disorder of the shop and bakehouse, in incidental deliveries of bread and so forth, and in parrying the probings of my uncle into my relations with the Blood, and his confiden-

tial explanations that ten shillings a week—which was what my mother paid him—was not enough to cover my accommodation. He was very anxious to keep that, but also he wanted more. There were neither books nor any seat nor corner in that house where reading was possible, no newspaper ever brought the clash of worldly things into its heavenward seclusion, horror of it all grew in me daily, and whenever I could I escaped into the streets and tramped about Chatham. The news-shops appealed to me particularly. One saw there smudgy illustrated sheets, the *Police News* in particular, in which vilely drawn pictures brought home to the dullest intelligence an interminable succession of squalid crimes, women murdered and put into boxes, buried under floors, old men bludgeoned at midnight by robbers, people thrust suddenly out of trains, happy lovers shot, vitrioled and so forth by rivals. I got my first glimpse of the life of pleasure in foully drawn pictures of "police raids" on this and that. Interspersed with these sheets were others in which Sloper, the urban John Bull, had his fling with gin bottle and obese umbrella, or the kindly, empty faces of the Royal Family appeared and reappeared, visiting this, opening that, getting married, getting offspring, lying in state, doing everything but anything, a wonderful, good-meaning, impenetrable race apart. . . .

I have never revisited Chatham; the impression it has left on my mind is one of squalid compression, unlit by any gleam of a maturer charity. All its effects arranged themselves as antithetical to the Bladesover effects. They confirmed and intensified all that Bladesover suggested. Bladesover declared itself to be the land, to be essentially England; I have already told how its airy spaciousness, its wide dignity, seemed to thrust village, church, and vicarage into corners, into a secondary and conditional significance. Here one gathered the corollary of that. Since the whole wide country of Kent was made up of contiguous Bladesovers and for the gentlefolk, the surplus of population, all who were not good tenants nor good labourers, Church of England, submissive and respectful, were necessarily thrust together, jostled out of sight, to fester as they might in this place that had the colours and even the smells of a well-packed dustbin. They should be grateful even for that; that, one felt, was the theory of it all.

And I loafed about this wilderness of crowded dinginess, with young, receptive, wide-open eyes, and through the blessing (or curse) of some fairy godmother of mine, asking and asking again: "But after all, *why*—— ?"

I wandered up through Rochester once, and had a glimpse of the Stour valley above the town, all horrible with cement-works and foully smoking chimneys and rows of workmen's cottages, minute, ugly, uncomfortable, and grimy. So I had my first intimation of how industrialism must live in a landlord's land. I spent some hours, too, in the streets that give upon the river, drawn by the spell of the sea. But I saw barges and ships stripped of magic and mostly devoted to cement, ice, timber and coal. The sailors looked to me gross and slovenly men, and the shipping struck me as clumsy, ugly, old, and dirty. I discovered that most sails don't fit the ships that hoist them, and that there may be as pitiful and squalid a display of poverty with a vessel as with a man. When I saw colliers unloading, watched the workers in the hold filling up silly little sacks and the succession of blackened, half-naked men that ran to and fro with these along a plank over a thirty-foot drop into filth and mud, I was first seized with admiration of their courage and toughness and then, "But after all, *why*——?" and the stupid ugliness of all this waste of muscle and endurance came home to me. Among other things it obviously wasted and deteriorated the coal. . . . And I had imagined great things of the sea! . . .

Well, anyhow, for a time that vocation was stilled.

But such impressions came into my leisure, and of that I had no excess. Most of my time was spent doing things for Uncle Frapp, and my evenings and nights perforce in the company of the two eldest of my cousins. One was errand boy at an oil-shop and fervently pious, and of him I saw nothing until the evening except at meals; the other was enjoying the midsummer holidays without any great elation, a singularly thin and abject, stunted creature he was, whose chief liveliness was to pretend to be a monkey, and who I am now convinced had some secret disease that drained his vitality away. If I met him now I should think him a pitiful little creature and be extremely sorry for him. Then I felt only a wondering aversion. He sniffed horribly, he was tired out by a couple of miles of loafing, he never started any conversation, and he seemed to prefer his own company to mine. His mother, poor woman, said he was the "thoughtful one."

Serious trouble came suddenly out of a conversation we held in bed one night. Some particularly pious phrase of my elder cousin's irritated me extremely, and I avowed outright my entire disbelief in the whole scheme of revealed religion. I had never said a word about my doubts to any one before, except to Ewart, who had first evolved them. I had never settled my

doubts until at this moment when I spoke. But it came to me then that the whole scheme of salvation of the Frapps was not simply doubtful but impossible. I fired this discovery out into the darkness with the greatest promptitude.

My abrupt denials certainly scared my cousins amazingly.

At first they could not understand what I was saying, and when they did I fully believe they expected an instant answer in thunderbolts and flames. They gave me more room in the bed forthwith, and then the elder sat up and expresssed his sense of my awfulness. I was already a little frightened at my temerity, but when he asked me categorically to unsay what I had said, what could I do but confirm my repudiation ?

"There's no hell," I said, "and no eternal punishment. No God would be such a fool as that."

My elder cousin cried aloud in horror, and the younger lay scared, but listening.

"Then you mean," said my eldest cousin, when at last he could bring himself to argue, "you might do just as you liked ? "

"If you were cad enough," said I.

Our little voices went on interminably, and at one stage my cousin got out of bed and made his brother do likewise, and knelt in the night dimness and prayed at me. That I found trying, but I held out valiantly. "Forgive him," said my cousin, "he knows not what he sayeth."

"You can pray if you like," I said, "but if you're going to cheek me in your prayers I draw the line."

The last I remember of that great discussion was my cousin deploring the fact that he "should ever sleep in the same bed with an Infidel ! "

The next day he astonished me by telling the whole business to his father. This was quite outside all my codes. Uncle Nicodemus sprang it upon me at the midday meal.

"You been sayin' queer things, George," he said abruptly. "You better mind what you're saying."

"What did he say, father ? " said Mrs. Frapp.

"Things I couldn't repeat," said he.

"What things ? " I asked hotly.

"Ask *'im*," said my uncle, pointing with his knife to his informant, and making me realise the nature of my offence. My aunt looked at the witness. "Not—— ? " she framed a question.

"Wuss," said my uncle. "Blarsphemy."

My aunt couldn't touch another mouthful. I was already a little troubled in my conscience by my daring, and now I began

to feel the black enormity of the course upon which I had embarked.

" I was only talking sense," I said.

I had a still more dreadful moment when presently I met my cousin in the brick alley behind the yard that led back to his grocer's shop.

" You sneak ! " I said, and smacked his face hard forthwith. " Now then," said I.

He started back, astonished and alarmed. His eyes met mine, and I saw a sudden gleam of resolution. He turned his other cheek to me.

" 'It it," he said. " 'It it. *I'll* forgive you."

I felt I had never encountered a more detestable way of evading a licking. I shoved him against the wall and left him there, forgiving me, and went back into the house.

" You better not speak to your cousins, George," said my aunt, " till you're in a better state of mind."

I became an outcast forthwith. At supper that night a gloomy silence was broken by my cousin saying, " 'E 'it me for telling you, and I turned the other cheek, muvver."

" 'E's got the evil one be'ind 'im now, a-ridin' on 'is back," said my aunt, to the grave discomfort of the eldest girl, who sat beside me.

After supper my uncle, in a few ill-chosen words, prayed me to repent before I slept.

" Suppose you was took in your sleep, George," he said ; " where'd you be then ? You jest think of that, me boy." By this time I was thoroughly miserable and frightened, and this suggestion unnerved me dreadfully, but I kept up an impenitent front. " To wake in 'ell," said Uncle Nicodemus in gentle tones. " You don't want to wake in 'ell, George, burnin' and screamin' for ever, do you ? You wouldn't like that ? "

He tried very hard to get me to " jest 'ave a look at the bake-'ouse fire " before I retired. " It might move you," he said.

I was awake longest that night. My cousins slept the sleep of faith on either side of me. I decided I would whisper my prayers, and stopped midway because I was ashamed, and perhaps also because I had an idea one didn't square God like that.

" No," I said, with a sudden confidence, " damn me if you're coward enough. . . . But you're not. . . . No ! You couldn't be ! "

I woke my cousins up with emphatic digs, and told them as much, triumphantly, and went very peacefully to sleep with my act of faith accomplished.

I slept not only through that night, but for all my nights since then. So far as any fear of Divine injustice goes, I sleep soundly, and shall, I know, to the end of things. That declaration was an epoch in my spiritual life.

§ 2

But I didn't expect to have the whole meeting on Sunday turned on to me.

It was. It all comes back to me, that convergence of attention, even the faint leathery smell of its atmosphere returns and the coarse feel of my aunt's black dress beside me in contact with my hand. I see again the old Welsh milkman "wrestling" with me—they all wrestled with me, by prayer or exhortation. And I was holding out stoutly, though convinced now by the contagion of their universal conviction that by doing so I was certainly and hopelessly damned. I felt that they were right, that God was probably like them, and that on the whole it didn't matter. And to simplify the business thoroughly I had declared I didn't believe anything at all. They confuted me by texts from Scripture which I now perceive was an illegitimate method of reply. When I got home, still impenitent and eternally lost and secretly very lonely and miserable and alarmed, Uncle Nicodemus docked my Sunday pudding.

One person only spoke to me like a human being on that day of wrath and that was the younger Frapp. He came up to me in the afternoon while I was confined upstairs with a Bible and my own thoughts.

"'Ello," he said, and fretted about.

"D'you mean to say there isn't—no one," he said, funking the word.

"No one?"

"No one watching yer—always."

"Why should there be?" I asked.

"You can't 'elp thoughts," said my cousin, "any'ow. . . . You mean——" He stopped hovering. "I s'pose I oughtn't to be talking to you."

He hesitated and flitted away with a guilty back glance over his shoulder. . . .

The following week made life quite intolerable for me; these people forced me at last into an Atheism that terrified me.

When I learnt that next Sunday the wrestling was to be resumed, my courage failed me altogether.

I happened upon a map of Kent in a stationer's window on Saturday and that set me thinking of one form of release. I studied it intently for half an hour perhaps, on Saturday night, got a route list of villages well fixed in my memory, and got up and started for Bladesover about five on Sunday morning while my two bedmates were still fast asleep.

§ 3

I remember something, but not so much of it as I should like to recall, of my long tramp to Bladesover House. The distance from Chatham is almost exactly seventeen miles, and it took me until nearly one. It was very interesting and I do not think I was over-fatigued, though I got rather pinched by one boot.

The morning must have been very clear, because I remember that near Itchinstow Hall I looked back and saw the estuary of the Thames, that river that has since played so large a part in my life. But at the time I did not know it was the Thames, I thought this great expanse of mud flats and water was the sea, which I had never yet seen nearly. And out upon it stood ships, sailing-ships and a steamer or so, going up to London or down into the great seas of the world. I stood for a long time watching these and thinking whether after all I should not have done better to have run away to sea.

The nearer I drew to Bladesover, the more doubtful I grew of the quality of my reception, and the more I regretted that alternative. I suppose it was the dirty clumsiness of the shipping I had seen nearly, that put me out of mind of that. I took a short cut through the Warren across the corner of the main park to intercept the people from the church. I wanted to avoid meeting any one before I met my mother, and so I went to a place where the path passed between banks, and without exactly hiding, stood up among the bushes. This place among other advantages eliminated any chance of seeing Lady Drew, who would drive round by the carriage road.

Standing up to waylay in this fashion I had a queer feeling of brigandage, as though I was some intrusive sort of bandit among these orderly things. It is the first time I remember having that outlaw feeling distinctly, a feeling that has played a large part in my subsequent life. I felt there existed no place for me—that I had to drive myself in.

Presently, down the hill, the servants appeared, straggling

by twos and threes, first some of the garden people and the butler's wife with them, then the two laundry-maids, odd inseparable old creatures, then the first footman talking to the butler's little girl, and at last, walking grave and breathless beside old Ann and Miss Fison, the black figure of my mother.

My boyish mind suggested the adoption of a playful form of appearance. "Coo-ee, mother!" said I, coming out against the sky, "Coo-ee!"

My mother looked up, went very white, and put her hand to her bosom. . . .

I suppose there was a fearful fuss about me. And of course I was quite unable to explain my reappearance. But I held out stoutly, "I won't go back to Chatham; I'll drown myself first." The next day my mother carried me off to Wimblehurst, took me fiercely and aggressively to an uncle I had never heard of before, near though the place was to us. She gave me no word as to what was to happen, and I was too subdued by her manifest wrath and humiliation at my last misdemeanour to demand information. I don't for one moment think Lady Drew was "nice" about me. The finality of my banishment was endorsed and underlined and stamped home. I wished very much now that I had run away to sea, in spite of the coaly dust and squalor Rochester had revealed to me. Perhaps overseas one came to different lands.

§ 4

I do not remember much of my journey to Wimblehurst with my mother except the image of her as sitting bolt upright, as rather disdaining the third-class carriage in which we travelled, and how she looked away from me out of the window when she spoke of my uncle. "I have not seen your uncle," she said, "since he was a boy. . . ." She added grudgingly, "Then he was supposed to be clever."

She took little interest in such qualities as cleverness.

"He married about three years ago, and set up for himself in Wimblehurst. . . . So I suppose she had some money."

She mused on scenes she had long dismissed from her mind. "Teddy," she said at last in the tone of one who has been feeling in the dark and finds. "He was called Teddy . . . about your age. . . . Now he must be twenty-six or -seven."

I thought of my uncle as Teddy directly I saw him; there was something in his personal appearance that in the light of that memory phrased itself at once as Teddiness—a certain Teddidity. To describe it in any other terms is more difficult.

It is nimbleness without grace, and alertness without intelligence. He whisked out of his shop upon the pavement, a short figure in grey and wearing grey carpet slippers; one had a sense of a young fattish face behind gilt glasses, wiry hair that stuck up and forward over the forehead, an irregular nose that had its aquiline moments, and that the body betrayed an equatorial laxity, an incipient "bow window" as the image goes. He jerked out of the shop, came to a stand on the pavement outside, regarded something in the window with infinite appreciation, stroked his chin, and, as abruptly, shot sideways into the door again, charging through it as it were behind an extended hand.

"That must be him," said my mother, catching at her breath.

We came past the window whose contents I was presently to know by heart, a very ordinary chemist's window except that there was a frictional electrical machine, an air-pump and two or three tripods and retorts replacing the customary blue, yellow, and red bottles above. There was a plaster of Paris horse to indicate veterinary medicines among these breakables, and below were scent-packets and diffusers and sponges and soda-water syphons and such-like things. Only in the middle there was a rubricated card, very neatly painted by hand, with these words—

> Buy Ponderevo's Cough Linctus *Now*.
> NOW!
> WHY?
> Twopence Cheaper than in Winter.
> You Store Apples! why not the Medicine
> You are Bound to Need?

in which appeal I was to recognise presently my uncle's distinctive note.

My uncle's face appeared above a card of infants' comforters in the glass pane of the door. I perceived his eyes were brown, and that his glasses creased his nose. It was manifest he did not know us from Adam. A stare of scrutiny allowed an expression of commercial deference to appear in front of it, and my uncle flung open the door.

"You don't know me?" panted my mother.

My uncle would not own he did not, but his curiosity was manifest. My mother sat down on one of the little chairs before the soap and patent medicine-piled counter, and her lips opened and closed.

"A glass of water, madam," said my uncle, waved his hand in a sort of curve, and shot away.

My mother drank the water and spoke. "That boy," she said, "takes after his father. He grows more like him every day. . . . And so I have brought him to you."

"His father, madam?"

"George."

For a moment the chemist was still at a loss. He stood behind the counter with the glass my mother had returned to him in his hand. Then comprehension grew.

"By Gosh!" he said. "Lord!" he cried. His glasses fell off. He disappeared, replacing them, behind a pile of boxed-up bottles of blood-mixture. "Eleven thousand virgins!" I heard him cry. The glass was banged down. "O-ri-ental Gums!"

He shot away out of the shop through some masked door. One heard his voice. "Susan! Susan!"

Then he reappeared with an extended hand. "Well, how *are* you?" he said. "I was never so surprised in my life. Fancy! . . . *You!*"

He shook my mother's impassive hand and then mine very warmly, holding his glasses on with his left forefinger.

"Come right in!" he cried—"come right in! Better late than never!" and led the way into the parlour behind the shop.

After Bladesover that apartment struck me as stuffy and petty, but it was very comfortable in comparison with the Frapp living-room. It had a faint, disintegrating smell of meals about it, and my most immediate impression was of the remarkable fact that something was hung about or wrapped round or draped over everything. There was bright-patterned muslin round the gas-bracket in the middle of the room, round the mirror over the mantel, stuff with ball-fringe along the mantel and casing in the fireplace—I first saw ball-fringe here—and even the lamp on the little bureau wore a shade like a large muslin hat. The table-cloth had ball-fringe and so had the window curtains, and the carpet was a bed of roses. There were little cupboards on either side of the fireplace, and in the recesses, ill-made shelves packed with books, and enriched with pinked American cloth. There was a dictionary lying face downward on the table, and the open bureau was littered with foolscap paper and the evidences of recently abandoned toil. My eye caught "The Ponderevo Patent Flat, a Machine you can live in," written in large firm letters. My uncle opened a little door like a cupboard

door in the corner of this room, and revealed the narrowest twist of staircase I had ever set eyes upon. "Susan!" he bawled again. "Wantje. Some one to see you. Surprisin'."

There came an inaudible reply, and a sudden loud bump over our heads as of some article of domestic utility pettishly flung aside, then the cautious steps of some one descending the twist, and then my aunt appeared in the doorway with her hand upon the jamb.

"It's Aunt Ponderevo," cried my uncle. "George's wife—and she's brought over her son!" His eye roved about the room. He darted to the bureau with a sudden impulse, and turned the sheet about the patent flat face down. Then he waved his glasses at us, "*You* know, Susan, my elder brother George. I told you about 'im lots of times."

He fretted across to the hearthrug and took up a position there, replaced his glasses and coughed.

My Aunt Susan seemed to be taking it in. She was then rather a pretty slender woman of twenty-three or -four, I suppose, and I remember being struck by the blueness of her eyes and the clear freshness of her complexion. She had little features, a button nose, a pretty chin and a long graceful neck that stuck out of her pale blue cotton morning-dress. There was a look of half-assumed perplexity on her face, a little quizzical wrinkle of the brow that suggested a faintly amused attempt to follow my uncle's mental operations, a vain attempt and a certain hopelessness that had in succession become habitual. She seemed to be saying, "Oh Lord! What's he giving me *this* time?" And as I came to know her better I detected, as a complication of her effort of apprehension, a subsidiary riddle to "What's he giving me?" and that was—to borrow a phrase from my school-boy language—"Is it keeps?" She looked at my mother and me, and back to her husband again.

"You know," he said. "George!"

"Well," she said to my mother, descending the last three steps of the staircase and holding out her hand! "you're welcome. Though it's a surprise. . . . I can't ask you to *have* anything, I'm afraid, for there isn't anything in the house." She smiled, and looked at her husband banteringly. "Unless he makes up something with his old chemicals, which he's quite equal to doing."

My mother shook hands stiffly, and told me to kiss my aunt.

"Well, let's all sit down," said my uncle, suddenly whistling through his clenched teeth, and briskly rubbing his hands together. He put up a chair for my mother, raised the blind

of the little window, lowered it again, and returned to his hearth-rug. "I'm sure," he said, as one who decides, "I'm very glad to see you."

§ 5

As they talked I gave my attention pretty exclusively to my uncle.

I noted him in great detail. I remember now his partially unbuttoned waistcoat, as though something had occurred to distract him as he did it up, and a little cut upon his chin. I liked a certain humour in his eyes. I watched too, with the fascination these things have for an observant boy, the play of his lips—they were a little oblique, and there was something "slipshod," if one may strain a word so far, about his mouth so that he lisped and sibilated ever and again—and the coming and going of a curious expression, triumphant in quality it was, upon his face as he talked. He fingered his glasses, which did not seem to fit his nose, fretted with things in his waistcoat pockets or put his hands behind him, looked over our heads, and ever and again rose to his toes and dropped back on his heels. He had a way of drawing air in at times through his teeth that gave a whispering zest to his speech. It's a sound I can only represent as a soft *Zzzz*.

He did most of the talking. My mother repeated what she had already said in the shop, "I have brought George over to you," and then desisted for a time from the real business in hand. "You find this a comfortable house?" she asked; and this being affirmed: "It looks—very convenient. . . . Not too big to be a trouble—no. You like Wimblehurst, I suppose?"

My uncle retorted with some inquiries about the great people of Bladesover, and my mother answered in the character of a personal friend of Lady Drew's. The talk hung for a time, and then my uncle embarked upon a dissertation upon Wimblehurst.

"This place," he began, "isn't of course quite the place I ought to be in."

My mother nodded as though she had expected that.

"It gives me no Scope," he went on. "It's dead-and-alive. Nothing happens."

"He's always wanting something to happen," said my Aunt Susan. "Some day he'll get a shower of things and they'll be too much for him."

"Not they," said my uncle buoyantly.

"Do you find business—slack?" asked my mother.

"Oh! one rubs along. But there's no Development—no Growth. They just come along here and buy pills when they want 'em—and a horse-ball or such. They've got to be ill before there's a prescription. That sort they are. You can't get 'em to launch out, you can't get 'em to take up anything new. F'rinstance, I've been trying lately—induce them to buy their medicines in advance, and in larger quantities. But they won't look at it! Then I tried to float a little notion of mine, sort of an insurance scheme for colds; you pay so much a week, and when you've got a cold you get a bottle of Cough Linctus so long as you can produce a substantial sniff. See? But Lord! they've no capacity for ideas, they don't catch on; no Jump about the place, no Life! Live!—they trickle, and what one has to do here is to trickle too—Zzzz."

"Ah!" said my mother.

"It doesn't suit me," said my uncle. "I'm the cascading sort."

"George was that," said my mother after a pondering moment.

My Aunt Susan took up the parable with an affectionate glance at her husband.

"He's always trying to make his old business jump," she said. "Always putting fresh cards in the window, or getting up to something. You'd hardly believe. It makes *me* jump sometimes."

"But it does no good," said my uncle.

"It does no good," said his wife, "It's not his *miloo*. . . ."

Presently they came upon a wide pause.

From the beginning of their conversation there had been the promise of this pause, and I pricked my ears. I knew perfectly what was bound to come; they were going to talk of my father. I was enormously strengthened in my persuasion when I found my mother's eye resting thoughtfully upon me in the silence, and then my uncle looked at me and then my aunt. I struggled unavailingly to produce an expression of meek stupidity.

"I think," said my uncle, "that George will find it more amusing to have a turn in the market-place than to sit here talking with us. There's a pair of stocks there, George—very interesting. Old-fashioned stocks."

"I don't mind sitting here," I said.

My uncle rose and in the most friendly way led me through the shop. He stood on his doorstep and jerked amiable directions to me.

"Ain't it sleepy, George, eh? There's the butcher's

dog over there, asleep in the road—half an hour from midday! If the last Trump sounded I don't believe it would wake! Nobody would wake! The chaps up there in the churchyard—they'd just turn over and say: 'Naar—you don't catch us, you don't! See?'. . . Well, you'll find the stocks just round that corner."

He watched me out of sight.

So I never heard what they said about my father after all.

§ 6

When I returned, my uncle had in some remarkable way become larger and central. "Tha'chu, George?" he cried, when the shop-door bell sounded. "Come right through"; and I found him, as it were, in the chairman's place before the draped grate.

The three of them regarded me.

"We have been talking of making you a chemist, George," said my uncle.

My mother looked at me. "I had hoped," she said, "that Lady Drew would have done something for him——" She stopped.

"In what way?" said my uncle.

"She might have spoken to some one, got him into something perhaps. . . ." She had the servant's invincible persuasion that all good things are done by patronage.

"He is not the sort of boy for whom things are done," she added, dismissing these dreams. "He doesn't accommodate himself. When he thinks Lady Drew wishes a thing, he seems not to wish it. Towards Mr. Redgrave too he has been—disrespectful—he is like his father."

"Who's Mr. Redgrave?"

"The Vicar."

"A bit independent?" said my uncle briskly.

"Disobedient," said my mother. "He has no idea of his place. He seems to think he can get on by slighting people and flouting them. He'll learn perhaps before it is too late."

My uncle stroked his cut chin and regarded me. "Have you learnt any Latin?" he asked abruptly.

I said I had not.

"He'll have to learn a little Latin," he explained to my mother, "to qualify. H'm. He could go down to the chap at the grammar school here—it's just been routed into existence again by the Charity Commissioners—and have lessons."

"What, me learn Latin!" I cried with emotion.

"A little," he said.

"I've always wanted——" I said and: "*Latin!*"

I had long been obsessed by the idea that having no Latin was a disadvantage in the world, and Archie Garvell had driven the point of this pretty earnestly home. The literature I had read at Bladesover had all tended that way. Latin had had a quality of emancipation for me that I find it difficult to convey. And suddenly, when I had supposed all learning was an an end for me, I heard this!

"It's no good to you, of course," said my uncle, "except to pass exams with, but there you are!"

"You'll have to learn Latin because you have to learn Latin," said my mother, "not because you *want* to. And afterwards you will have to learn all sorts of other things. . . ."

The idea that I was going on learning, that to read and master the contents of books was still to be justifiable as a duty, overwhelmed all other facts. I had had it rather clear in my mind for some weeks that all that kind of opportunity might close to me for ever. I began to take a lively interest in this new project.

"Then shall I live here?" I asked, "with you, and study . . . as well as work in the shop? . . ."

"That's the way of it," said my uncle.

I parted from my mother that day in a dream, so sudden and important was this new aspect of things to me. I was to learn Latin! Now that the humiliation of my failure at Bladesover was past for her, now that she had a little got over her first intense repugnance at this resort to my uncle and contrived something that seemed like a possible provision for my future, the tenderness natural to a parting far more significant than any of our previous partings crept into her manner.

She sat in the train to return, I remember, and I stood at the open door of her compartment, and neither of us knew how soon we should cease for ever to be a trouble to one another.

"You must be a good boy, George," she said. "You must learn. . . . And you mustn't set yourself up against those who are above you and better than you. . . . Or envy them."

"No, mother," I said.

I promised carelessly. Her eyes were fixed upon me. I was wondering whether I could by any means begin Latin that night.

Something touched her heart then, some thought, some memory; perhaps some premonition. . . . The solitary porter began slamming carriage doors.

"George," she said hastily, almost shamefully, "kiss me!"

I stepped up into her compartment as she bent forward. She caught me in her arms quite eagerly, she pressed me to her—a strange thing for her to do. I perceived her eyes were extraordinarily bright, and then this brightness burst along the lower lids and rolled down her cheeks.

For the first and last time in my life I saw my mother's tears. Then she had gone, leaving me discomforted and perplexed, forgetting for a time even that I was to learn Latin, thinking of my mother as of something new and strange.

The thing recurred though I sought to dismiss it, it stuck itself into my memory against the day of fuller understanding. Poor, proud, habitual, sternly narrow soul! poor, difficult and misunderstanding son! it was the first time that ever it dawned upon me that my mother also might perhaps feel.

§ 7

My mother died suddenly and, it was thought by Lady Drew, inconsiderately, the following spring. Her ladyship instantly fled to Folkestone with Miss Somerville and Fison, until the funeral should be over and my mother's successor installed.

My uncle took me over to the funeral. I remember there was a sort of prolonged crisis in the days preceding this because, directly he heard of my loss, he had sent a pair of check trousers to the Judkins people in London to be dyed black, and they did not come back in time. He became very excited on the third day, and sent a number of increasingly fiery telegrams without any result whatever, and succumbed next morning with a very ill grace to my Aunt Susan's insistence upon the resources of his dress-suit. In my memory those black legs of his, in a particularly thin and shiny black cloth—for evidently his dress-suit dated from adolescent and slenderer days—straddle like the Colossus of Rhodes over my approach to my mother's funeral. Moreover, I was inconvenienced and distracted by a silk hat he had bought me, my first silk hat, much ennobled, as his was also, by a deep mourning band.

I remember, but rather indistinctly, my mother's white panelled housekeeper's room and the touch of oddness about it that she was not there, and the various familiar faces made strange by black, and I seem to recall the exaggerated self-consciousness that arose out of their focussed attention. No doubt the sense of the new silk hat came and went and came again in my emotional chaos. Then something comes out clear and sorrow-

ful, rises out clear and sheer from among all these rather base and inconsequent things, and once again I walk before all the other mourners close behind her coffin as it is carried along the churchyard path to her grave, with the old Vicar's slow voice saying regretfully and unconvincingly above me, triumphant solemn things.

"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

Never die! The day was a high and glorious morning in spring, and all the trees were budding and bursting into green. Everywhere there were blossoms and flowers; the pear-trees and cherry-trees in the sexton's garden were sunlit snow, there were nodding daffodils and early tulips in the graveyard beds, great multitudes of daisies, and everywhere the birds seemed singing. And in the middle was the brown coffin end, tilting on men's shoulders, and half occluded by the vicar's Oxford hood.

And so we came to my mother's waiting grave. . . .

For a time I was very observant, watching the coffin lowered, hearing the words of the ritual. It seemed a very curious business altogether.

Suddenly, as the service drew to its end, I felt something had still to be said which had not been said, realised that she had withdrawn in silence, neither forgiving me nor hearing from me—those now lost assurances. Suddenly I knew I had not understood. Suddenly I saw her tenderly; remembered not so much tender or kindly things of her as her crossed wishes and the ways in which I had thwarted her. Surprisingly I realised that behind all her hardness and severity she had loved me, that I was the only thing she had ever loved and that until this moment I had never loved her. And now she was there and deaf and blind to me, pitifully defeated in her designs for me, covered from me so that she could not know. . . .

I dug my nails into the palms of my hands, I set my teeth, but tears blinded me, sobs would have choked me had speech been required of me. The old Vicar read on, there came a mumbled response—and so on to the end. I wept as it were internally, and only when we had come out of the churchyard could I think and speak calmly again.

Stamped across this memory are the little black figures of my uncle and Rabbits, telling Avebury the sexton and undertaker that "it had all passed off very well—very well indeed.

§ 8

That is the last I shall tell of Bladesover. The drop-scene falls on that, and it comes no more as an actual presence into this novel. I did indeed go back there once again, but under circumstances quite immaterial to my story. But in a sense Bladesover has never left me; it is, as I said at the outset, one of those dominant explanatory impressions that make the framework of my mind. Bladesover illuminates England; it has become all that is spacious, dignified, pretentious, and truly conservative in English life. It is my social datum. That is why I have drawn it here on so large a scale.

When I came back at last to the real Bladesover on an inconsequent visit, everything was far smaller than I could have supposed possible. It was as though everything had shivered and shrivelled a little at the Lichtenstein touch. The harp was still in the saloon, but there was a different grand piano with a painted lid and a metrostyle pianola, and an extraordinary quantity of artistic litter and *bric-à-brac* scattered about. There was the trail of the Bond Street showroom over it all. The furniture was still under chintz, but it wasn't the same sort of chintz although it pretended to be, and the lustre-dangling chandeliers had passed away. Lady Lichtenstein's books replaced the brown volumes I had browsed among—they were mostly presentation copies of contemporary novels, and the *National Review* and the *Empire Review* and the *Nineteenth Century and After* jostled current books on the tables—English new books in gaudy catchpenny "artistic" covers, French and Italian novels in yellow, German art handbooks of almost incredible ugliness. There were abundant evidences that her ladyship was playing with the Keltic Renascence, and a great number of ugly cats made of china—she "collected" china and stoneware cats—stood about everywhere—in all colours, in all kinds of deliberately comic, highly glazed distortion. . . .

It is nonsense to pretend that finance makes any better aristocrats than rent. Nothing can make an aristocrat but pride, knowledge, training, and the sword. These people were no improvement on the Drews, none whatever. There was no effect of a beneficial replacement of passive unintelligent people by active intelligent ones. One felt that a smaller but more enterprising and intensely undignified variety of stupidity had replaced the large dulness of the old gentry, and that was all. Bladesover, I thought, had undergone just the same change between the seventies and the new century that had overtaken

the dear old *Times*, and heaven knows how much more of the decorous British fabric. These Lichtensteins and their like seem to have no promise in them at all of any fresh vitality for the kingdom. I do not believe in their intelligence or their power—they have nothing new about them at all, nothing creative nor rejuvenescent, no more than a disorderly instinct of acquisition; and the prevalence of them and their kind is but a phase in the broad slow decay of the great social organism of England. They could not have made Bladesover, they cannot replace it; they just happen to break out over it—saprophytically.

Well—that was my last impression of Bladesover.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE WIMBLEHURST APPRENTICESHIP

§ 1

So far as I can remember now, except for that one emotional phase by the graveside, I passed through all these experiences rather callously. I had already, with the facility of youth, changed my world, ceased to think at all of the old school routine and put Bladesover aside for digestion at a later stage. I took up my new world in Wimblehurst with the chemist's shop as its hub, set to work at Latin and *materia medica*, and concentrated upon the present with all my heart. Wimblehurst is an exceptionally quiet and grey Sussex town, rare among south of England towns in being largely built of stone. I found something very agreeable and picturesque in its clean cobbled streets, its odd turnings and abrupt corners, and in the pleasant park that crowds up one side of the town. The whole place is under the Eastry dominion, and it was the Eastry influence and dignity that kept its railway station a mile and three-quarters away. Eastry House is so close that it dominates the whole; one goes across the market-place (with its old lock-up and stocks), past the great pre-Reformation church, a fine grey shell, like some empty skull from which the life has fled, and there at once are the huge wrought-iron gates, and one peeps through them to see the façade of this place, very white and large and fine, down a long avenue of yews. Eastry was far greater than Bladesover and an altogether completer example of the eighteenth-century system. It ruled not two villages but a borough, that had sent its sons and cousins to parliament almost as a matter of right so long as

its franchise endured. Every one was in the system, every one—except my uncle. He stood out and complained.

My uncle was the first real breach I found in the great front of Bladesovery the world had presented me, for Chatham was not so much a breach as a confirmation. But my uncle had no respect for Bladesover and Eastry—none whatever. He did not believe in them. He was blind even to what they were. He propounded strange phrases about them, he exfoliated and wagged about novel and incredible ideas.

"This place," said my uncle, surveying it from his open doorway in the dignified stillness of a summer afternoon, "wants Waking Up!"

I was sorting up patent medicines in the corner.

"I'd like to let a dozen young Americans loose into it," said my uncle. "Then we'd see."

I made a tick against Mother Shipton's Sleeping Syrup. We had cleared our forward stock.

"Things must be happening *somewhere*, George," he broke out in a querulously rising note as he came back into the little shop. He fiddled with the piled dummy boxes of fancy soap and scent and so forth that adorned the end of the counter, then turned about petulantly, stuck his hands deeply into his pockets and withdrew one to scratch his head. "I must do *something*," he said. "I can't stand it.

"I must invent something. And shove it. . . . I could.

"Or a play. There's a deal of money in a play, George. What would you think of me writing a play—eh? . . . There's all sorts of things to be done.

"Or the stog-igschange."

He fell into that meditative whistling of his.

"Sac-ramental wine!" he swore, "this isn't the world—it's Cold Mutton Fat! That's what Wimblehurst is! Cold Mutton Fat!—dead and stiff! And I'm buried in it up to the arm-pits. Nothing ever happens, nobody wants things to happen 'scept me! Up in London, George, things happen. America! I wish to Heaven, George, I'd been born American—where things hum.

"What can one *do* here? How can one grow? While we're sleepin' here with our Capital oozing away—into Lord Eastry's pockets for rent—men are up there. . . ." He indicated London as remotely over the top of the dispensing counter, and then as a scene of great activity by a whirl of the hand and a wink and a meaning smile at me.

"What sort of things do they do?" I asked.

"Rush about," he said. "Do things! Somethin' glorious. There's cover gambling. Ever heard of that, George?" He drew the air in through his teeth. "You put down a hundred, say, and buy ten thousand pounds worth. See? That's a cover of one per cent. Things go up one, you sell, realise cent. per cent.; down, whiff, it's gone! Try again! Cent. per cent., George, every day Men are made or done for in an hour. And the shoutin'! Zzzz. . . . Well, that's one way, George. Then another way—there's Corners!"

"They're rather big things, aren't they?" I ventured.

"Oh, if you go in for wheat or steel—yes. But suppose you tackled a little thing, George. Just some leetle thing that only needed a few thousands. Drugs for example. Shoved all you had into it—staked your liver on it, so to speak. Take a drug—take ipecac., for example. Take a lot of ipecac. Take all there is! See? There you are! There aren't unlimited supplies of ipecacuanha—can't be!—and it's a thing people *must* have. Then quinine again! You watch your chance, wait for a tropical war breaking out, let's say, and collar all the quinine. Where *are* they? Must have quinine, you know. Eh? Zzzz.

"Lord! there's no end of things—no end of *little* things. Dill-water—all the suff'ring babes yowling for it. Eucalyptus again—cascara—witch-hazel—menthol—all the toothache things. Then there's antiseptics, and curare, cocaine. . . ."

"Rather a nuisance to the doctors," I reflected.

"They got to look out for themselves. By Jove, yes. They'll do you if they can, and you do them. Like brigands. That makes it romantic. That's the Romance of Commerce, George. You're in the mountains there! Think of having all the quinine in the world, and some millionaire's pampud wife gone ill with malaria, eh? That's a squeeze, George, eh? Eh? Millionaire on his motor-car outside, offering you any price you liked. That 'ud wake up Wimblehurst. . . . Lord! You haven't an Idea down here. Not an idea. Zzzz."

He passed into a rapt dream, from which escaped such fragments as: "Fifty per cent. advance, Sir; security—to-morrow. Zzzz."

The idea of cornering a drug struck upon my mind then as a sort of irresponsible monkey-trick that no one would ever be permitted to do in reality. It was the sort of nonsense one would talk to make Ewart laugh and set him going on to still odder possibilities. I thought it was part of my uncle's way of talking. But I've learnt differently since. The whole trend of modern money-making is to foresee something that will pre-

sently be needed and put it out of reach, and then to haggle yourself wealthy. You buy up land upon which people will presently want to build houses, you secure rights that will bar vitally important developments, and so on, and so on. Of course the naïve intelligence of a boy does not grasp the subtler developments of human inadequacy. He begins life with a disposition to believe in the wisdom of grown-up people, he does not realise how casual and disingenuous has been the development of law and custom, and he thinks that somewhere in the State there is a power as irresistible as a headmaster's to check mischievous and foolish enterprises of every sort. I will confess that when my uncle talked of cornering quinine, I had a clear impression that any one who contrived to do that would pretty certainly go to jail. Now I know that any one who could really bring it off would be much more likely to go to the House of Lords !

My uncle ranged over the gilt labels of his bottles and drawers for a while, dreaming of corners in this and that. But at last he reverted to Wimblehurst again.

" You got to be in London when these things are in hand. Down here——!

" Jee-rusalem ! " he cried. " Why did I plant myself here ? Everything's done. The game's over. Here's Lord Eastry, and he's got everything, except what his lawyers get, and before you get any more change this way you'll have to dynamite him —and them. *He* doesn't want anything more to happen. Why should he ? Any change 'ud be a loss to him. He wants everything to burble along and burble along and go on as it's going for the next ten thousand years, Eastry after Eastry, one parson down another come, one grocer dead, get another ! Any one with any ideas better go away. They *have* gone away ! Look at all these blessed people in this place ! Look at 'em ! All fast asleep, doing their business out of habit—in a sort of dream. Stuffed men would do just as well—just. They've all shook down into their places. *They* don't want anything to happen either. They're all broken in. There you are ! Only what are they all alive for ? . . .

" Why can't they get a clockwork chemist ? "

He concluded as he often concluded these talks. " I must invent something—that's about what I must do. Zzzz. Some convenience. Something people want. . . . Strike out. . . . You can't think, George, of anything everybody wants and hasn't got ? I mean something you could turn out retail under a shilling, say ? Well, *you* think, whenever you haven't got anything better to do. See ? "

§ 2

So I remember my uncle in that first phase, young, but already a little fat, restless, fretful, garrulous, putting in my fermenting head all sorts of discrepant ideas. Certainly he was educational. . . .

For me the years at Wimblehurst were years of pretty active growth. Most of my leisure and much of my time in the shop I spent in study. I speedily mastered the modicum of Latin necessary for my qualifying examinations, and—a little assisted by the Government Science and Art Department classes that were held in the grammar school—went on with my mathematics. There were classes in physics, in chemistry, in mathematics and machine drawing, and I took up all these subjects with considerable avidity. Exercise I got chiefly in the form of walks. There was some cricket in the summer and football in the winter sustained by young men's clubs that levied a parasitic blackmail on the big people and the sitting member, but I was never very keen at these games. I didn't find any very close companions among the youths of Wimblehurst. They struck me, after my Cockney schoolmates, as loutish and slow, servile and furtive, spiteful and mean. *We* used to swagger, but these countrymen dragged their feet and hated an equal who didn't ; we talked loud, but you only got the real thoughts of Wimblehurst in a knowing undertone behind its hand. And even then they weren't much in the way of thoughts.

No, I didn't like those young countrymen, and I'm no believer in the English countryside under the Bladesover system as a breeding-ground for honourable men. One hears a frightful lot of nonsense about the Rural Exodus and the degeneration wrought by town life upon our population. To my mind, the English townsman even in the slums is infinitely better spiritually, more courageous, more imaginative and cleaner than his agricultural cousin. I've seen them both when they didn't think they were being observed, and I know. There was something about my Wimblehurst companions that disgusted me. It's hard to define. Heaven knows that at that cockney boarding school at Goudhurst we were coarse enough, the Wimblehurst youngsters had neither words nor courage for the sort of thing we used to do—for our bad language, for example ; but, on the other hand, they displayed a sort of sluggish, real lewdness—lewdness is the word—a baseness of attitude. Whatever we exiled urbans did at Goudhurst was touched with something, however coarse, of romantic imagination. We had read the

Boys of England, and told each other stories. In the English countryside there are no books at all, no songs, no drama, no valiant sin even ; all these things have never come or they were taken away and hidden generations ago, and the imagination aborts and bestialises. That, I think, is where the real difference against the English rural man lies. It is because I know this that I do not share in the common repinings because our countryside is being depopulated, because our population is passing through the furnace of the towns. They starve, they suffer no doubt, but they come out of it hardened, they come out of it with souls. . . .

Of an evening the Wimblehurst blade, shiny-faced from a wash and with some loud finery, a coloured waistcoat or a vivid tie, would betake himself to the Eastry Arms billiard-room, or to the bar parlour of some minor pub. where nap could be played. One soon sickened of his slow knowingness, the cunning observation of his deadened eyes, his idea of a "good story," always, always told in undertones, poor dirty worm ! his shrewd elaborate manœuvres for some petty advantage, a drink to the good or such-like deal. There rises before my eyes as I write, young Hopley Dodd, the son of the Wimblehurst auctioneer, the pride of Wimblehurst, its finest flower, with his fur waistcoat and his bulldog pipe, his riding-breeches—he had no horse—and his gaiters, as he used to sit, leaning forward and watching the billiard-table from under the brim of his artfully tilted hat. A half-dozen phrases constituted his conversation : "Hard lines ! " he used to say, and "Good baazness," in a bass bleat. Moreover, he had a long, slow whistle that was esteemed the very cream of humorous comment. Night after night he was there. . . .

Also you know he would not understand that *I* could play billiards, and regarded every stroke I made as a fluke. For a beginner I didn't play so badly, I thought. I'm not so sure now ; that was my opinion at the time. But young Dodd's scepticism and the "good baazness" finally cured me of my disposition to frequent the Eastry Arms, and so these noises had their value in my world.

I made no friends among the young men of the place at all, and though I was entering upon adolescence I have no love-affair to tell of here. Not that I was not waking up to that aspect of life in my middle teens. I did, indeed, in various slightly informal ways, scrape acquaintance with casual Wimblehurst girls ; with a little dressmaker's apprentice I got upon shyly speaking terms, and a pupil teacher in the National School went

further and was "talked about" in connection with me; but I was not by any means touched by any reality of passion for either of these young people; love—love as yet came to me only in my dreams. I only kissed these girls once or twice. They rather disconcerted than developed those dreams. They were so clearly not "it." I shall have much to say of love in this story, but I may break it to the reader now that it is my *rôle* to be a rather ineffectual lover. Desire I know well enough—indeed, too well; but love I have been shy of. In all my early enterprises in the war of the sexes, I was torn between the urgency of the body and a habit of romantic fantasy that wanted every phase of the adventure to be generous and beautiful. And I had a curiously haunting memory of Beatrice, of her kisses in the bracken and her kiss upon the wall, that somehow pitched the standard too high for Wimblehurst's opportunities. I will not deny I did in a boyish way attempt a shy, rude adventure or so in love-making at Wimblehurst; but through these various influences, I didn't bring things off to any extent at all. I left behind me no devastating memories, no splendid reputation. I came away at last, still inexperienced and a little thwarted, with only a natural growth of interest and desire in sexual things.

If I fell in love with any one in Wimblehurst it was with my aunt. She treated me with a kindliness that was only half maternal—she petted my books, she knew about my certificates, she made fun of me in a way that stirred my heart to her. Quite unconsciously I grew fond of her. . . .

My adolescent years at Wimblehurst were on the whole laborious, uneventful years that began in short jackets and left me in many ways nearly a man, years so uneventful that the Calculus of Variations is associated with one winter, and an examination in Physics for Science and Art Department Honours marks an epoch. Many divergent impulses stirred within me, but the master impulse was a grave young disposition to work and learn and thereby in some not very clearly defined way get out of the Wimblehurst world into which I had fallen. I wrote with some frequency to Ewart, self-conscious, but, as I remember them, not unintell gent letters, dated in Latin and with lapses into Latin quotation that roused Ewart to parody. There was something about me in those days more than a little priggish. But it was, to do myself justice, something more than the petty pride of learning. I had a very grave sense of discipline and preparation that I am not ashamed at all to remember. I was serious. More serious than I am at the present time. More serious, indeed, than any adult seems to be. I was capable then of efforts—

of nobilities. . . . They are beyond me now. I don't see why, at forty, I shouldn't confess I respect my own youth. I had dropped being a boy quite abruptly. I thought I was presently to go out into a larger and quite important world and do significant things there. I thought I was destined to do something definite to a world that had a definite purpose. I did not understand then, as I do now, that life was to consist largely in the world's doing things to me. Young people never do seem to understand that aspect of things. And, as I say, among my educational influences my uncle, all unsuspected, played a leading part, and perhaps among other things gave my discontent with Wimblehurst, my desire to get away from that clean and picturesque emptiness, a form and expression that helped to emphasise it. In a way that definition made me patient. "Presently I shall get to London," I said, echoing him.

I remember him now as talking, always talking, in those days. He talked to me of theology, he talked of politics, of the wonders of science and the marvels of art, of the passions and the affections, of the immortality of the soul and the peculiar actions of drugs; but predominantly and constantly he talked of getting on, of enterprises, of inventions and great fortunes, of Rothschilds, silver kings, Vanderbilts, Goulds, flotations, realisations and the marvellous ways of Chance with men—in all localities, that is to say, that are not absolutely sunken to the level of Cold Mutton Fat.

When I think of those early talks, I figure him always in one of three positions. Either we were in the dispensing lair behind a high barrier, he pounding up stuff in a mortar perhaps, and I rolling pill-stuff into long rolls and cutting it up with a sort of broad, fluted knife, or he stood looking out of the shop door against the case of sponges and spray-diffusers, while I surveyed him from behind the counter, or he leant against the little drawers behind the counter, and I hovered dusting in front. The thought of those early days brings back to my nostrils the faint smell of scent that was always in the air, marbled now with streaks of this drug and now of that, and to my eyes the rows of jejune glass bottles with gold labels, mirror-reflected, that stood behind him. My aunt, I remember, used sometimes to come into the shop in a state of aggressive sprightliness, a sort of connubial ragging expedition, and get much fun over the abbreviated Latinity of those gilt inscriptions. "Ol Amjig, George," she would read derisively, "and he pretends it's almond oil! Snap!—and that's mustard. Did you *Ever*, George?

"Look at him, George, looking dignified. I'd like to put an

old label on to *him* round the middle like his bottles are, with Ol Pondo on it. That's Latin for Impostor, George—*must* be. He'd look lovely with a stopper."

"*You* want a stopper," said my uncle, projecting his face. . . .

My aunt, dear soul, was in those days quite thin and slender, with a delicate rosebud complexion and a disposition to connubial badinage, to a sort of gentle skylarking. There was a silvery ghost of lisping in her speech. She was a great humorist, and as the constraint of my presence at meals wore off, I became more and more aware of a filmy but extensive net of nonsense she had woven about her domestic relations until it had become the reality of her life. She affected a derisive attitude to the world at large and applied the epithet "old" to more things than I have ever heard linked to it before or since. "Here's the old newspaper," she used to say to my uncle. "Now don't go and get it in the butter, you silly old Sardine!"

"What's the day of the week, Susan?" my uncle would ask.

"Old Monday, Sossidge," she would say, and add, "I got all my Old Washing to do. Don't I *know* it! . . ."

She had evidently been the wit and joy of a large circle of schoolfellows, and this style had become a second nature with her. It made her very delightful to me in that quiet place. Her customary walk even had a sort of hello! in it. Her chief preoccupation in life was, I believe, to make my uncle laugh, and when by some new nickname, some new quaintness or absurdity, she achieved that end, she was, behind a mask of sober amazement, the happiest woman on earth. My uncle's laugh, when it did come, I must admit was, as Baedeker says, "rewarding." It began with gusty blowings and snortings, and opened into a clear "Ha ha!" but in its fullest development it included, in those youthful days, falling about anyhow and doubling up tightly, and whackings of the stomach, and tears and cries of anguish. I never in my life heard my uncle laugh to his maximum except at her, he was commonly too much in earnest for that, and he didn't laugh much at all, to my knowledge, after those early years. Also she threw things at him to an enormous extent in her resolve to keep things lively in spite of Wimblehurst; sponges out of stock she threw, cushions, balls of paper, clean washing, bread; and once up the yard when they thought that I and the errand-boy and the diminutive maid-of-all-work were safely out of the way, she smashed a boxful of eight-ounce bottles I had left to drain, assaulting my uncle with a new soft broom. Sometimes she would shy things at me—but not often. There seemed always laughter round and about her—all three of us

would share hysterics at times—and on one occasion the two of them came home from church shockingly ashamed of themselves, because of a storm of mirth during the sermon. The Vicar, it seems, had tried to blow his nose with a black glove as well as the customary pocket-handkerchief. And afterwards she had picked up her own glove by the finger, and looking innocently but intently sideways, had suddenly by this simple expedient exploded my uncle altogether. We had it all over again at dinner.

"But it shows you," cried my uncle, suddenly becoming grave, "what Wimblehurst is, to have us all laughing at a little thing like that! We weren't the only ones that giggled. Not by any means! And, Lord! it *was* funny!"

Socially, my uncle and aunt were almost completely isolated. In places like Wimblehurst the tradesmen's wives always are isolated socially, all of them, unless they have a sister or a bosom friend among the other wives, but the husbands met in various bar-parlours or in the billiard-room of the Eastry Arms. But my uncle, for the most part, spent his evenings at home. When first he arrived in Wimblehurst I think he had spread his effect of abounding ideas and enterprise rather too aggressively; and Wimblehurst, after a temporary subjugation, had rebelled and done its best to make a butt of him. His appearance in a public-house led to a pause in any conversation that was going on.

"Come to tell us about everything, Mr. Pond'revo?" some one would say politely.

"You wait," my uncle used to answer, disconcerted, and sulk for the rest of his visit.

Or some one with an immense air of innocence would remark to the world generally, "They're talkin' of rebuildin' Wimblehurst all over again, I'm told. Anybody heard anything of it? Going to make it a reg'lar smart-goin', enterprisin' place—kind of Crystal Pallas."

"Earthquake and a pestilence before you get *that*," my uncle would mutter, to the infinite delight of every one, and add something inaudible about "Cold Mutton Fat. . . ."

§ 3

We were torn apart by a financial accident to my uncle of which I did not at first grasp the full bearings. He had developed what I regarded as an innocent intellectual recreation which he called stock-market meteorology. I think he got the idea from the use of curves in the graphic presentation of associated variations that he saw me plotting. He secured some of my squared

paper and, having cast about for a time, decided to trace the rise and fall of certain mines and railways. "There's something in this, George," he said, and I little dreamt that among other things that were in it was the whole of his spare money and most of what my mother had left to him in trust for me.

"It's as plain as can be," he said. "See, here's one system of waves and here's another! These are prices for Union Pacifics—extending over a month. Now next week, mark my words, they'll be down one whole point. We're getting near the steep part of the curve again. See? It's absolutely scientific. It's verifiable. Well, and apply it! You buy in the hollow and sell on the crest, and—there you are!"

I was so convinced of the triviality of this amusement that to find at last that he had taken it in the most disastrous earnest overwhelmed me.

He took me for a long walk to break it to me, over the hills towards Yare and across the great gorse commons by Hazelbrow.

"There are ups and downs in life, George," he said—halfway across that great open space, and paused against the sky. . . . "I left out one factor in the Union Pacific analysis."

"*Did* you?" I said, struck by the sudden change in his voice. "But you don't mean——?"

I stopped and turned on him in the narrow sandy rut of pathway and he stopped likewise.

"I do, George. I *do* mean. It's bust me! I'm a bankrupt here and now."

"Then——?"

"The shop's bust too. I shall have to get out of that."

"And me?"

"Oh, you!—*you're* all right. You can transfer your apprenticeship, and—er—well, I'm not the sort of man to be careless with trust funds, you can be sure. I kept that aspect in mind. There's some of it left, George—trust me—quite a decent little sum."

"But you and aunt?"

"It isn't *quite* the way we meant to leave Wimblehurst, George; but we shall have to go. Sale; all the things shoved about and ticketed—lot a hundred and one. Ugh! . . . It's been a larky little house in some ways. The first we had. Furnishing—a spree in its way. . . . Very happy. . . ." His face winced at some memory. "Let's go on, George," he said shortly, near choking, I could see.

I turned my back on him, and did not look round again for a little while.

"That's how it is, you see, George," I heard him after a time.

When we were back in the high road again he came alongside, and for a time we walked in silence.

"Don't say anything home yet," he said presently. "Fortunes of War. I got to pick the proper time with Susan—else she'll get depressed. Not that she isn't a first-rate brick whatever comes along."

"All right," I said; "I'll be careful"; and it seemed to me for the time altogether too selfish to bother him with any further inquiries about his responsibility as my trustee. He gave a little sigh of relief at my note of assent, and was presently talking quite cheerfully of his plans. . . . But he had, I remember, one lapse into moodiness that came and went suddenly. "Those others!" he said, as though the thought had stung him for the first time.

"What others?" I asked.

"Damn them!" said he.

"But what others?"

"All those damned stick-in-the-mud-and-die-slowly tradespeople: Ruck, the butcher, Marbel, the grocer. Snape! Gord! George, *how* they'll grin! . . ."

I thought him over in the next few weeks, and I remember now in great detail the last walk we had together before he handed over the shop and me to his successor. For he had the good luck to sell his business, "lock, stock, and barrel"—in which expression I found myself and my indentures included. The horrors of a sale by auction of the furniture even were avoided.

I remember that either coming or going on that occasion, Ruck, the butcher, stood in his doorway and regarded us with a grin that showed his long teeth.

"You half-witted hog!" said my uncle. "You grinning hyæna"; and then, "Pleasant day, Mr. Ruck."

"Goin' to make your fortun' in London, than?" said Mr. Ruck with slow enjoyment.

That last excursion took us along the causeway to Beeching, and so up the downs and round almost as far as Steadhurst, home. My moods, as we went, made a mingled web. By this time I had really grasped the fact that my uncle had, in plain English, robbed me; the little accumulations of my mother, six hundred pounds and more, that would have educated me and started me in business, had been eaten into and was mostly gone into the unexpected hollow that ought to have been a crest of the Union Pacific curve, and of the remainder he still

gave no account. I was too young and inexperienced to insist on this or know how to get it, but the thought of it all made streaks of decidedly black anger in that scheme of interwoven feelings. And you know, I was also acutely sorry for him—almost as sorry as I was for my Aunt Susan. Even then I had quite found him out. I knew him to be weaker than myself; his incurable, irresponsible childishness was as clear to me then as it was on his death-bed, his redeeming and excusing imaginative silliness. Through some odd mental twist perhaps I was disposed to exonerate him even at the cost of blaming my poor old mother who had left things in his untrustworthy hands.

I should have forgiven him altogether, I believe, if he had been in any manner apologetic to me; but he wasn't that. He kept reassuring me in a way I found irritating. Mostly, however, his solicitude was for Aunt Susan and himself.

"It's these Crises, George," he said, "try Character. Your aunt's come out well, my boy."

He made meditative noises for a space.

"Had her cry of course"—the thing had been only too painfully evident to me in her eyes and swollen face—"who wouldn't? But now—buoyant again! . . . She's a Corker.

"We'll be sorry to leave the little house of course. It's a bit like Adam and Eve, you know. Lord! what a chap old Milton was!

> "The world was all before them, where to choose
> Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.

It sounds, George. . . . Providence their guide! . . . Well—thank goodness there's no imeedgit pro pect of either Cain or Abel!

"After all, it won't be so bad up there. Not the scenery, perhaps, or the air we get here, but—*Life!* We've got very comfortable little rooms, very comfortable considering, and I shall rise. We're not done yet, we're not beaten; don't think that, George. I shall pay twenty shillings in the pound before I've done—you mark my words, George—twenty-five to you. . . . I got this situation within twenty-four hours—others offered. It's an important firm—one of the best in London. I looked to that—I might have got four or five shillings a week more—elsewhere. Quarters I could name. But I said to them plainly, wages to go on with, but opportunity's my game—development. We understood each other."

He threw out his chest, and the little round eyes behind his glasses rested valiantly on imaginary employers.

We would go on in silence for a space while he revised and restated that encounter. Then he would break out abruptly with some banal phrase.

"The Battle of Life, George, my boy," he would cry, or "Ups and Downs!"

He ignored or waived the poor little attempts I made to ascertain my own position. "That's all right," he would say; or, "Leave all that to me. *I'll* look after them." And he would drift away towards the philosophy and moral of the situation. What was I to do?

"Never put all your resources into one chance, George, that's the lesson I draw from this. Have forces in reserve. It was a hundred to one, George, that I was right—a hundred to one. I worked it out afterwards. And here we are spiked on the off-chance. If I'd have only kept back a little, I'd have had it on U.P. next day, like a shot, and come out on the rise. There you are!"

His thoughts took a graver turn.

"It's when you bump up against Chance like this, George, that you feel the need of religion. Your hard and fast scientific men—your Spencers and Huxleys—they don't understand that. I do. I've thought of it a lot lately—in bed and about. I was thinking of it this morning while I shaved. It's not irreverent for me to say it, I hope—but God comes in on the off-chance, George. See? Don't you be too cocksure of anything, good or bad. That's what I make out of it. I could have sworn. Well, do you think I—particular as I am—would have touched those Union Pacifics with trust-money at all if I hadn't thought it a thoroughly good thing—good without spot or blemish? . . . And it was bad!

"It's a lesson to me. You start in to get a hundred per cent. and you come out with that. It means, in a way, a reproof for Pride. I've thought of that, George—in the Night Watches. I was thinking this morning when I was shaving, that that's where the good of it all comes in. At bottom I'm a mystic in these affairs. You calculate you're going to do this or that, but at bottom who knows at all *what* he's doing? When you most think you're doing things, they're being done right over your head. *You're* being done—in a sense. Take a hundred-to-one chance, or one to a hundred—what does it matter? You're being Led."

It's odd that I heard this at the time with unutterable contempt, and now that I recall it—well, I ask myself, what have I got better?

"I wish," said I, becoming for a moment outrageous, "*you* were being Led to give me some account of my money, uncle."

"Not without a bit of paper to figure on, George, I can't. But you trust me about that, never fear. You trust me."

And in the end I had to.

I think the bankruptcy hit my aunt pretty hard. There was, so far as I can remember now, a complete cessation of all those cheerful outbreaks of elasticity—no more skylarking in the shop nor scampering about the house. But there was no fuss that I saw, and only little signs in her complexion of the fits of weeping that must have taken her. She didn't cry at the end, though to me her face with its strain of self-possession was more pathetic than any weeping. "Well," she said to me as she came through the shop to the cab, "Here's old orf, George! Orf to Mome number two! Good-bye!" And she took me in her arms and kissed me and pressed me to her. Then she dived straight for the cab before I could answer her.

My uncle followed, and he seemed to me a trifle too valiant and confident in his bearing for reality. He was unusually white in the face. He spoke to his successor at the counter. "Here we go!" he said. "One down, the other up. You'll find it a quiet little business so long as you run it on quiet lines—a nice, quiet little business. There's nothing more? No? Well, if you want to know anything write to me. I'll always explain fully. Anything—business, place, or people. You'll find Pil Antibil, a little overstocked, by-the-by. I found it soothed my mind the day before yesterday making 'em, and I made 'em all day. Thousands! And where's George? Ah! there you are! I'll write to you, George, *fully*, about all that affair. Fully!"

It became clear to me, as if for the first time, that I was really parting from my Aunt Susan. I went out on to the pavement and saw her head craned forward, her wide-open blue eyes and her little face intent on the shop that had combined for her all the charms of a big doll's house and a little home of her very own. "Good-bye!" she said to it and to me. Our eyes met for a moment—perplexed. My uncle bustled out and gave a few totally unnecessary directions to the cabman and got in beside her. "All right?" asked the driver. "Right," said I; and he woke up the horse with a flick of his whip. My aunt's eyes surveyed me again. "Stick to your old science and things, George, and write and tell me when they make you a Professor," she said cheerfully.

She stared at me for a second longer with eyes growing wider

and brighter and a smile that had become fixed, glanced again at the bright little shop still saying "Ponderevo" with all the emphasis of its fascia, and then flopped back hastily out of sight of me into the recesses of the cab. Then it had gone from before me, and I beheld Mr. Snape the hairdresser inside his shop regarding its departure with a quiet satisfaction and exchanging smiles and significant headshakes with Mr. Marbel.

§ 4

I was left, I say, as part of the lock, stock, and barrel, at Wimblehurst with my new master, a Mr. Mantell, who plays no part in the progress of this story except in so far as he effaced my uncle's traces. So soon as the freshness of this new personality faded, I began to find Wimblehurst not only a dull but a lonely place, and to miss my Aunt Susan immensely. The advertisements of the summer terms for Cough Linctus were removed; the bottles of coloured water—red, green, and yellow—restored to their places; the horse announcing veterinary medicine, which my uncle, sizzling all the while, had coloured in careful portraiture of a Goodwood favourite, rewhitened; and I turned myself even more resolutely than before to Latin (until the passing of my preliminary examination enabled me to drop that), and then to mathematics and science.

There were classes in Electricity and Magnetism at the grammar school. I took a little "elementary" prize in that in my first year and a medal in my third; and in Chemistry and Human Physiology and Sound, Light and Heat, I did well. There was also a lighter, more discursive subject called Physiography, in which one ranged among the sciences and encountered Geology as a process of evolution from Eozoon to Eastry House, and Astronomy as a record of celestial movements of the most austere and invariable integrity. I learnt out of badly written condensed little text-books, and with the minimum of experiment, but still I learnt. Only thirty years ago it was, and I remember I learnt of the electric light as an expensive, impracticable toy, the telephone as a curiosity, electric traction as a practical absurdity. There was no argon, no radium, no phagocytes—at least to my knowledge, and aluminium was a dear infrequent metal. The fastest ships in the world went then at nineteen knots, and no one but a lunatic here and there ever thought it possible that men might fly.

Many things have happened since then, but the last glance I had of Wimblehurst two years ago remarked no change what-

ever in its pleasant tranquillity. They had not even built any fresh houses—at least not actually in the town, though about the station there had been some building. But it was a good place to do work in, for all its quiescence. I was soon beyond the small requirements of the Pharmaceutical Society's examination, and as they do not permit candidates to sit for that until one and twenty, I was presently filling up my time and preventing my studies becoming too desultory by making an attack upon the London University degree of Bachelor of Science, which impressed me then as a very splendid but almost impossible achievement. The degree in mathematics and chemistry appealed to me as particularly congenial—albeit giddily inaccessible. I set to work. I had presently to arrange a holiday and go to London to matriculate, and so it was I came upon my aunt and uncle again. In many ways that visit marked an epoch. It was my first impression of London at all. I was then nineteen, and by a conspiracy of chances my nearest approach to that human wilderness had been my brief visit to Chatham. Chatham, too, had been my largest town. So that I got London at last with an exceptional freshness of effect, as the sudden revelation of a whole unsuspected other side to life.

I came to it on a dull and smoky day by the South Eastern Railway, and our train was half an hour late, stopping and going on and stopping again. I marked beyond Chislehurst the growing multitude of villas, and so came stage by stage through multiplying houses and diminishing interspaces of market garden and dingy grass to regions of interlacing railway lines, big factories, gasometers and wide reeking swamps of dingy little homes, more of them and more and more. The number of these and their dinginess and poverty increased, and here rose a great public-house and here a Board School and here a gaunt factory; and away to the east there loomed for a time a queer incongruous forest of masts and spars. The congestion of houses intensified and piled up presently into tenements; I marvelled more and more at this boundless world of dingy people; whiffs of industrial smell, of leather, of brewing, drifted into the carriage, the sky darkened, I rumbled thunderously over bridges, van-crowded streets, peered down on and crossed the Thames with an abrupt *éclat* of sound. I got an effect of tall warehouses, of grey water barge-crowded, of broad banks of indescribable mud, and then I was in Cannon Street Station—a monstrous dirty cavern with trains packed across its vast floor and more porters standing along the platform than I had ever seen in my life before. I

alighted with my portmanteau and struggled along, realising for the first time just how small and weak I could still upon occasion feel. In this world, I felt, an Honours medal in Electricity and Magnetism counted for nothing at all.

Afterwards I drove in a cab down a cañon of rushing street between high warehouses, and peeped up astonished at the blackened greys of Saint Paul's. The traffic of Cheapside—it was mostly in horse omnibuses in those days—seemed stupendous, its roar was stupendous; I wondered where the money came from to employ so many cabs, what industry could support the endless jostling stream of silk-hatted, frock-coated, hurrying men. Down a turning I found the Temperance Hotel Mr. Mantell had recommended to me. The porter in a green uniform, who took over my portmanteau, seemed, I thought, to despise me a good deal.

§ 5

Matriculation kept me for four dull full days and then came an afternoon to spare, and I sought out Tottenham Court Road through a perplexing network of various and crowded streets. But this London was vast! it was endless! it seemed the whole world had changed into packed frontages and hoardings and street spaces. I got there at last and made inquiries, and I found my uncle behind the counter of the pharmacy he managed, an establishment that did not impress me as doing a particularly high-class trade. "Lord!" he said at the sight of me, "I was wanting something to happen!"

He greeted me warmly. I had grown taller and he, I thought, had grown shorter and smaller and rounder, but otherwise he was unchanged. He struck me as being rather shabby, and the silk hat he produced and put on, when, after mysterious negotiations in the back premises he achieved his freedom to accompany me, was past its first youth; but he was as buoyant and confident as ever.

"Come to ask me about all *that?*" he cried. "I've never written yet."

"Oh! among other things," said I with a sudden regrettable politeness and waived the topic of his trusteeship to ask after my Aunt Susan.

"We'll have her out of it," he said suddenly; "we'll go somewhere. We don't get you in London every day."

"It's my first visit," I said, "I've never seen London before"; and that made him ask me what I thought of it and the rest of the talk was London, London, to the exclusion of all smaller topics.

He took me up the Hampstead Road almost to the Cobden statue, plunged into some back streets to the left, and came at last to a blistered front door that responded to his latchkey, one of a long series of blistered front doors with fanlights and apartment cards above. We found ourselves in a drab-coloured passage that was not only narrow and dirty but desolatingly empty, and then he opened a door and revealed my aunt sitting at the window with a little sewing-machine on a bamboo occasional table before her, and "work"—a plum-coloured walking-dress I judged at its most analytical stage—scattered over the rest of the apartment.

At the first glance I judged my aunt was plumper than she had been, but her complexion was just as fresh and her China-blue eye as bright as in the old days.

"London," she said, didn't "get blacks" on her.

She still "cheeked" my uncle, I was pleased to find. "What are you old Poking in for at *this* time—*Gubbitt?*" she said when he appeared, and she still looked with a practised eye for the facetious side of things. When she saw me behind him, she gave a little cry and stood up radiant. Then she became grave.

I was surprised at my own emotion in seeing her. She held me at arm's length for a moment, a hand on each shoulder, and looked at me with a sort of glad scrutiny. She seemed to hesitate and then pecked a little kiss off my cheek.

"You're a man, George," she said, as she released me, and continued to look at me for a while.

Their *ménage* was one of a very common type in London. They occupied what is called the dining-room floor of a small house, and they had the use of a little inconvenient kitchen in the basement that had once been a scullery. The two rooms, bedroom behind and living-room in front, were separated by folding-doors that were never now thrown back, and indeed, in the presence of a visitor, not used at all. There was of course no bathroom or anything of that sort available, and there was no water-supply except to the kitchen below. My aunt did all the domestic work, though she could have afforded to pay for help if the build of the place had not rendered that inconvenient to the pitch of impossibility. There was no sort of help available except that of indoor servants, for whom she had no accommodation. The furniture was their own, it was partly second-hand, but on the whole it seemed cheerful to my eye, and my aunt's bias for cheap, gay-figured muslin had found ample scope. In many ways I should think it must have been an extremely inconvenient and cramped sort of home, but at the time I took it,

as I was taking everything, as being there and in the nature of things. I did not see the oddness of solvent decent people living in a habitation so clearly neither designed nor adapted for their needs, so wasteful of labour and so devoid of beauty as this was, and it is only now as I describe this that I find myself thinking of the essential absurdity of an intelligent community living in such makeshift homes. It strikes me now as the next thing to wearing second-hand clothes.

You see it was a natural growth, part of that system to which Bladesover, I hold, is the key. There are wide regions of London, miles of streets of houses, that appear to have been originally designed for prosperous middle-class homes of the early Victorian type. There must have been a perfect fury of such building in the thirties, forties, and fifties. Street after street must have been rushed into being, Campden Town way, Pentonville way, Brompton way, West Kensington way, in the Victoria region and all over the minor suburbs of the south side. I am doubtful if many of these houses had any long use as the residences of single families, if from the very first almost their tenants did not makeshift and take lodgers and sublet. They were built with basements, in which their servants worked and lived—servants of a more submissive and troglodytic generation who did not mind stairs—the dining-room (with folding-doors) was a little above the ground-level, and in that the wholesome boiled and roast with damp boiled potatoes and then pie to follow, was consumed, and the numerous family read and worked in the evening, and above was the drawing-room (also with folding-doors), where the infrequent callers were received. That was the vision at which those industrious builders aimed. Even while these houses were being run up, the threads upon the loom of fate were shaping to abolish altogether the type of household that would have fitted them. Means of transit were developing to carry the moderately prosperous middle-class families out of London, education and factory employment were whittling away at the supply of rough, hardworking, obedient girls who would stand the subterranean drudgery of these places, new classes of hard-up middle-class people such as my uncle, employés of various types, were coming into existence, for whom no homes were provided. None of these classes have ideas of what they ought to be, or fit in any legitimate way into the Bladesover theory that dominates our minds. It was nobody's concern to see them housed under civilised conditions, and the beautiful laws of supply and demand had free play. They had to squeeze in. The landlords came out financially intact from their

blundering enterprise. More and more these houses fell into the hands of married artisans or struggling widows or old servants with savings, who became responsible for the quarterly rent and tried to sweat a living by sub-letting furnished or unfurnished apartments.

I remember now that a poor grey-haired old woman who had an air of having been roused from a nap in the dustbin, came out into the area and looked up at us as we three went out from the front door to "see London" under my uncle's direction. She was the sub-letting occupier, she squeezed out a precarious living by taking the house whole and sub-letting it in detail, and she made her food and got the shelter of an attic above and a basement below by the transaction. And if she didn't chance to "let" steadily, out she went to pauperdom and some other poor sordid old adventurer tried in her place. . . .

It is a foolish community that can house whole classes, useful and helpful, honest and loyal classes, in such squalidly unsuitable dwellings. It is by no means the social economy it seems, to use up old women's savings and inexperience in order to meet the landlord's demands. But any one who doubts this thing is going on right up to to-day need only spend an afternoon in hunting for lodgings in any of the regions of London I have named.

But where has my story got to? My uncle, I say, decided I must be shown London, and out we three went as soon as my aunt had got her hat on, to catch all that was left of the day.

§ 6

It pleased my uncle extremely to find I had never seen London before. He took possession of the metropolis forthwith. "London, George," he said, "takes a lot of understanding. It's a great place. Immense. The richest town in the world, the biggest port, the greatest manufacturing town, the Imperial city—the centre of civilisation, the heart of the world! See those sandwich men down there! That third one's hat! Fair treat! You don't see poverty like that in Wimblehurst, George! And many of them high Oxford honour men too. Brought down by drink! It's a wonderful place, George—a whirlpool, a maelstrom! whirls you up and whirls you down."

I have a very confused memory of that afternoon's inspection of London. My uncle took us to and fro showing us over his London, talking erratically, following a route of his own. Sometimes we were walking, sometimes we were on the tops of great

staggering horse omnibuses in a heaving jumble of traffic, and at one point we had tea in an Aerated Bread Shop. But I remember very distinctly how we passed down Park Lane under an overcast sky, and how my uncle pointed out the house of this child of good fortune and that with succulent appreciation.

I remember, too, that as he talked I would find my aunt watching my face as if to check the soundness of his talk by my expression.

"Been in love yet, George?" she asked suddenly, over a bun in the tea-shop.

"Too busy, aunt," I told her.

She bit her bun extensively, and gesticulated with the remnant to indicate that she had more to say.

"How are *you* going to make your fortune?" she said so soon as she could speak again. "You haven't told us that."

"'Lectricity," said my uncle, taking breath after a deep draught of tea.

"If I make it at all," I said. "For my part I think I shall be satisfied with something less than a fortune."

"We're going to make ours—suddenly," she said. "So *he* old says." She jerked her head at my uncle. "He won't tell me when—so I can't get anything ready. But it's coming. Going to ride in our carriage and have a garden. Garden—like a bishop's."

She finished her bun and twiddled crumbs from her fingers. "I shall be glad of the garden," she said. "It's going to be a real big one with rosaries and things. Fountains in it. Pampas grass. Hothouses."

"You'll get it all right," said my uncle, who had reddened a little.

'Grey horses in the carriage, George," she said. "It's nice to think about when one's dull. And dinners in restaurants often and often. And theatres—in the stalls. And money and money and money."

"You may joke," said my uncle, and hummed for a moment.

"Just as though an old Porpoise like him would ever make money," she said, turning her eyes upon his profile with a sudden lapse to affection. "He'll just porpoise about."

"I'll do something," said my uncle, "you bet! Zzzz!" and rapped with a shilling on the marble table.

"When you do you'll have to buy me a new pair of gloves," she said, "anyhow. That finger's past mending. Look! you Cabbage—you." And she held the split under his nose, and pulled a face of comical fierceness.

My uncle smiled at these sallies at the time, but afterwards, when I went back with him to the pharmacy—the low-class business grew brisker in the evening and they kept open late——he reverted to it in a low expository tone. "Your aunt's a bit impatient George. She gets at me. It's only natural. . . . A woman doesn't understand how long it takes to build up a position. No. . . . In certain directions now—I am—quietly—building up a position. Now here. . . . I get this room. I have my three assistants. Zzzz. It's a position that, judged by the criterion of immeedjit income, isn't perhaps so good as I deserve, but strategically—yes. It's what I want. I make my plans. I rally my attack."

"What plans," I said, "are you making?"

"Well, George, there's one thing you can rely upon. I'm doing nothing in a hurry. I turn over this idea and that, and I don't talk—indiscreetly. There's—— No! I don't think I can tell you that. And yet, why *not?*"

He got up and closed the door into the shop. "I've told no one," he remarked, as he sat down again. "I owe you something."

His face flushed slightly, he leant forward over the little table towards me.

"Listen!" he said.

I listened.

"Tono-Bungay," said my uncle very slowly and distinctly.

I thought he was asking me to hear some remote, strange noise. "I don't hear anything," I said reluctantly to his expectant face.

He smiled undefeated. "Try again," he said, and repeated, 'Tono-Bungay."

"Oh *that!*" I said.

"Eh?" said he.

"But what is it?"

"Ah!" said my uncle, rejoicing and expanding. "What *is* it? That's what you got to ask? What *wor't* it be?" He dug me violently in what he supposed to be my ribs. "George," he cried—"George, watch this place! There's more to follow."

And that was all I could get from him.

That, I believe, was the very first time that the words Tono-Bungay were heard on earth—unless my uncle indulged in monologues in his chamber—a highly probable thing. Its utterance certainly did not seem to me at the time to mark any sort of epoch, and had I been told this word was the Open Sesame to whatever

pride and pleasure the grimy front of London hid from us that evening, I should have laughed aloud.

"Coming now to business," I said after a pause, and with a chill sense of effort; and I opened the question of his trust.

My uncle sighed, and leant back in his chair. "I wish I could make all this business as clear to you as it is to me," he said. "However—— Go on! Say what you have to say."

§ 7

After I left my uncle that evening I gave way to a feeling of profound depression. My uncle and aunt seemed to me to be leading—I have already used the word too often but I must use it again—*dingy* lives. They seemed to be adrift in a limitless crowd of dingy people, wearing shabby clothes, living uncomfortably in shabby second-hand houses, going to and fro on pavements that had always a thin veneer of greasy, slippery mud, under grey skies that showed no gleam of hope of anything for them but dinginess until they died. It seemed absolutely clear to me that my mother's little savings had been swallowed up and that my own prospect was all too certainly to drop into and be swallowed up myself sooner or later by this dingy London ocean. The London that was to be an adventurous escape from the slumber of Wimblehurst had vanished from my dreams. I saw my uncle pointing to the houses in Park Lane and showing a frayed shirt-cuff as he did so. I heard my aunt: "I'm to ride in my carriage then. So he old says."

My feelings towards my uncle were extraordinarily mixed. I was intensely sorry not only for my Aunt Susan but for him—for it seemed indisputable that as they were living then so they must go on—and at the same time I was angry with the garrulous vanity and silliness that had clipped all my chance of independent study, and imprisoned her in those grey apartments. When I got back to Wimblehurst I allowed myself to write him a boyishly sarcastic and sincerely bitter letter. He never replied. Then, believing it to be the only way of escape for me, I set myself far more grimly and resolutely to my studies than I had ever done before. After a time I wrote to him in more moderate terms, and he answered me evasively. And then I tried to dismiss him from my mind and went on working.

Yes, that first raid upon London under the moist and chilly depression of January had an immense effect upon me. It was for me an epoch-making disappointment. I had thought of

London as a large, free, welcoming, adventurous place, and I saw it slovenly and harsh and irresponsive.

I did not realise at all what human things might be found behind those grey frontages, what weakness that whole forbidding façade might presently confess. It is the constant error of youth to over-estimate the Will in things. I did not see that the dirt, the discouragement, the discomfort of London could be due simply to the fact that London was a witless old giantess of a town, too slack and stupid to keep herself clean and maintain a brave face to the world. No! I suffered from the sort of illusion that burnt witches in the seventeenth century. I endued her grubby disorder with a sinister and magnificent quality of intention.

And my uncle's gestures and promises filled me with doubt and a sort of fear for him. He seemed to me a lost little creature, too silly to be silent, in a vast implacable condemnation. I was full of pity and a sort of tenderness for my Aunt Susan, who was doomed to follow his erratic fortunes mocked by his grandiloquent promises. . . .

I was to learn better. But I worked with the terror of the grim underside of London in my soul during all my last year at Wimblehurst.

(To be continued)

THE MONTH

EDITORIAL: *THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ARTS IN THE REPUBLIC—I. Literature: Communications from Two Authors; MR. JAMES' Complete Edition.* ⁂ ⁂ **POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC:** THE UNEMPLOYED—(i) R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM *on "Aspects of the Social Question";* (ii) W. H. DAVIES *on "How it Feels to be Unemployed";* (iii) A. M., *"A Complete Actuarial Scheme for Insuring John Doe against all the Vicissitudes of Life";* À-D., *"The Personality of the German Emperor";* H. W. NEVINSON, *Notes on the Balkans, with a Table.* ⁂ ⁂ **REVIEWS:** *L'Ile des Pingouins, par ANATOLE FRANCE, reviewed by* JOSEPH CONRAD; *The Age of Shakespeare, by ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE, reviewed by* DOCTOR LEVIN SCHÜCKING, *of Göttingen University*

EDITORIAL *

The Functions of the Arts in the Republic

I. Literature

We have received communications from two authors, each distinguished, the one venerable, the other sardonic; yet each makes use of the same word in describing the career of the venture whose first pages are in the hands of the public to-day—the singular word is "run." Says one, after some kindly and surely august messages of comfort:

"You are setting out to run a race compared with which that of Marathon is child's play."

Says the second: "If you do so-and-so you probably won't succeed, but you will, at any rate, give your proprietors a run for their money." As we propose to do exactly the so-and-so comprised in Mr. Shaw's phrases, Mr. Shaw's words may be taken at once as a benediction and as a prophecy of disaster.

But however they are taken, either of these messages, the word "run" unites them in suggesting a singular collocation of ideas, for how could the word "run" be applied to a review of what is commercially described as "of the 'heavy' order," a review consecrated to the arts, to letters and to ideas? Surely Phidippides—if it was Phidippides who ran from the fatal plain to the Forum uplifted in the pure air—was no hoplite in heavy greaves and many-plied ox-hide shield; he must have run with a mere clout about his loins.

* The Editorial is written by various members of the Editorial staff, whose initials are appended to their various contributions. We print also, and shall continue to print, in the Editorial section, communications from various writers who will write, as they please, either informal notes on subjects of the day that interest them or more studied articles upon political or diplomatic topics. The main section of the Review is devoted strictly to *Belles-lettres*. The reviews of books will be by contributors to the main section of the Review, those contributors writing about the books that most interest them.

But we accept with gratefulness the commendation and the word; we "cast off" bearing them in our hands as do the passengers who, on board great liners, leave the quays, their hands filled with little baskets of Concord grapes or great bouquets of hot-house flowers, the tributes of kindly attention. We cast off, or perhaps even cast off is not the just word: we leave the beach. And if the personal note be not too paradoxically applied to a thing so impersonal in its aims as the English Review, we leave the beach with the emotions of the oarsmen setting out for a long pull. The grating of the keel on the shingle is over, and over the friendly shoves of the bystanding fishermen. We have given the last kick with our heels in the mixture of foam and shingle. We are kneeling for a moment on the gunwale of the bows, holding on by each hand to a thwart, balanced a moment, vacant-minded a moment, before we go to meet the waters of an unexplored offing. And probably before we scramble in and take up the oars the emotion most immediately present in our minds is that of pleasure in the quality of those who have shoved us off.

For the one, *clarum et venerabile nomen*, is he not the oldest and the finest fisher on the beach? and the other—has he not with an extraordinary deftness navigated his whole fleets of cockle-shells in seas so choppy that the imagination reels at their thought?

The English Review is a periodical devoted to the arts, to letters and ideas and—to continue the "freighter's" simile—with our passengers in the stern now we consider the horizon—for topics of the month!

For a periodical devoted to arts and letters, to those fine things the humaner letters, the topics of the month are the production of a well-flavoured book, the commencement of a historic series, the production of a play not too shallow, the chronicling of a symphony, the opening of a gallery containing fine etchings. Thus to a review devoted—and let us emphasise the point—to the arts and to letters the publication of the first volume of Mr. James' collected edition is the topic of the month.

But the English Review, devoted as it is to the arts and to letters, is devoted in addition to ideas. The appearance of this great body of imaginative effort—definitely settling the form of a life-work of an author so single-minded in the effort to express, so felicitous and so successful in expressing in imagina-

tive terms all that is most real, most permanent and most fugitive in the life around him—the appearance of this great body of imaginative effort must be regarded as an event at least as important in the history of a civilisation as the recording of the will of a sovereign people with regard to some policy of exclusion, of admission, of humanitarianism, of pugnacity. For the record of events assimilated by the human mind to-day moulds the event of to-morrow, and the nearer the record comes to registering the truth, and so to rendering it as to make it assimilable by the human apprehension, the more near it comes to being a historic expression, the more near it comes to being a historic event itself. The ENGLISH REVIEW sets boldly upon its front the words "No party bias." This means to say that we are here not to cry out "Go in this direction," but simply to point out where we stand.

SPEAKING broadly, literature at the present day divides itself into two sharply defined classes—the imaginative and the "factual"—and there is a third type, the merely inventive, which, if it be not in any way to be contemned, has functions in the Republic nearly negligible. The functions of inventive literature are to divert, to delight, to tickle, to promote appetites; of imaginative literature, to record life in terms of the author—to stimulate thought. By this, we repeat, we do not mean to contemn the faculty of invention, a faculty which in the history of English literature has been all too wholly contemned, for the power to tell a story is as essential to the artist as is in human affairs the body to the soul; and the common superstition of the English writer that to take any old story—the history of the fall of Troy, that of the Prodigal Son, or an episode from Richard of Gloucester's chronicles—and to use it as if it were the frame-work round which to mould a sculptor's fabric of poeticised atmospheres and studies of character, this singular *heresia Anglicana* is probably as much as anything responsible for the extremely small hold which imaginative literature to-day has upon the body of the English people. It may indeed be said that in certain forms of art a work of imagination without invention is almost as nugatory as a work of invention without imagination. That perhaps is an exaggerated statement of the case, but it is for the moment worth setting down.

IT is a statement worth setting down because, exaggerated as it is, it may awaken thought, and the province of the imagina-

tive writer is by exaggeration due to his particular character—by characteristic exaggeration in fact—precisely to awaken thought. That is to say, that this is his utilitarian function in the Republic: his actual and first desire must always be the expression of himself—the expression of himself exactly as he is, not as he would like other people to think him, the expression of his view of life as it is, not as he would like it to be.

It is for this reason that the work of Mr. James is of such great value to the Republic. For whatever his private views may be, we have no means of knowing them. He himself never appears, he never buttonholes us, he never moralises. He may be a Republican, he may be an Anglican; he may be a believer in autocracy. But he never, by the fifth of an inch, drags round his pictures of life so as to make it appear that, if the social state were what he desires it to be, all would be well with the world. We rise from extremely protracted readings of his works with the feeling that we have assisted at a great number of affairs, of having met a great number of people whom we should just recognise.

This is the true characteristic of modern life in which intimacies are so rare, in which social contacts are so innumerable, in which it is no longer a matter of long letters but of the shortest notes. And what we so very much need to-day is a picture of the life we live. It is only the imaginative writer who can supply this, because no collection of facts and no tabulation of figures can give us any sense of proportion. In England, the country of Accepted Ideas, the novelist who is intent merely to register—to *constater*—is almost unknown. Yet it is England probably that most needs him, for England, less than any of the nations, knows where it stands, or to what it trends. Flaubert said that had the French really read his "Education Sentimentale" France would have avoided the horrors of the *Débâcle*. Mr. James might say as much for his own country and for the country he has so much benefited by making it his own.

(To be continued)

POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC

I

The Unemployed

It is singular that in England, where any feelings of definite rank are at their least distinctive, the barriers between class and class are at the apex of rigidity. Yet they are—these barriers—singularly unsuspected. Who would suspect that a plasterer of a house in building would not eat in the same room with a bricklayer? And yet—to make the limitations most visible—who would not sympathise with a man of gentle birth whose sister insisted on marrying a railway porter? And these barriers are the causes of strange ignorances between class and class. What, for instance, do we know of the life of the poor man? He has never been voiced: he is, in the nature of the case, inarticulate. We enter his house seldom or never; if he rises in the world he forgets very soon. He may remember the material objects of his former life: he forgets how the world looked; he forgets his early views, his early knowledge.

Yet at certain times the poor man is omnipresent. He invades us, he fills us with fears, with misgivings, and he makes our hearts bleed. It is, for instance, impossible for a humane man to think of Sunderland, where firm after firm of shipbuilders has failed and shut down his work; where there is a whole town on the verge of starvation—it is impossible for a man with any heart at all to think of Sunderland without at least looking at the hedgerows with misgivings. In his garden the autumn blackbirds may be calling; the tall clumps of dahlias stand motionless and polychromatic, awaiting the first touch of frost. But his eyes will wander to the hedgerows when he thinks of the stricken town. For, if God sends a store of berries for the birds, so the saying is, the winter will be a hard one. And if this winter is a hard one—then God help the stricken towns.

And the poor are breaking in on us everywhere. They break in on us as we drive through the streets. We see them in their knots, in their bands, at street corners; the parks are full of them, the public squares. We drive past these broken knots

with a touch of fear. If the winter is very hard—they may crowd together. They may sack West London. We are the men whose hearts bleed for them—but how, if passing through the streets they catch us afoot, shall we be able to escape from them? In the last unemployed riots our mothers were driving to the city. They met the unemployed; it was with great difficulty that they escaped with their lives.

They penetrate to our ears poignantly in the sounds of music. We are walking down deserted streets of a Sunday in church time and suddenly in the quiet we hear the high clear notes of a tin-whistle, bird-like, swift. A very burly navvy, white-whiskered, pink-cheeked, is walking down the middle of the road. We hear him play the "Shaking of the Sheets," "My Lady Greensleeves" and an eighteenth-century country dance whose name we have forgotten. He is an out-of-work from Buckingham. We sit in our restaurant, the windows open, and suddenly there rises up, in excellent voices, with perfect precision, the madrigal called the "Pie and the Apple"; it is succeeded by "The Five Bells of Osney," in canon. Out-of-works from Manchester are walking down the middle of the street. They are the unemployed: tramps do not sing madrigals or play those ancient tunes with such "technique."

With pity, with fear, or with music—in a hundred ways—the poor man is breaking in on us. Perhaps it is not worse than it used to be. We remember that as small children the most familiar song we knew was one that used to be sung by bands of dirtily clad men in the frosty days:

We've got no work to do-oo-oo,
We've got no work to do-oo-oo,
We're all froze out poor lab'rin' men
And we've got no work to do.

We were so familiar with this song we used to sing it to our toys.

But of knowledge of the lives and aspirations of the poor man how little we have. We are barred off from him by the invisible barriers: we have no records of his views in literature. It is astonishing how little literature has to show of the life of

the poor. Of late years we can call to mind only the two Bettesworth books which, excellent in their way, treat the poor man objectively. Mr. W. H. Davies, one of whose impressions of poverty we print in the present number, has written his autobiography. But this is the autobiography of the tramp, not of a man who makes his living by working with his hands. Otherwise, although we can lay no claim to omniscience, it may be considered a fairly safe step to say that of the thousands of books that pour upon us day by day and year by year, the percentage which gives us any insight into the inner workings of the poor man's mind is either infinitesimal or non-existent.

A SERIOUS attempt has now been made to fill in this lacuna, and since the principal aim of the ENGLISH REVIEW is by means of the literature which it prints and the literature to which it calls attention to ascertain where we stand and to aid in the comprehension of one kind of mind by another, we feel no hesitation in seriously commending this work to our readers. It is called "A Poor Man's House," * and is written by Mr. Stephen Reynolds. Mr. Reynolds, we understand, was in his earlier days a science student of some distinction, but circumstances forced him to abandon a career which, if any career could do it, ought to train the young men in the habit of mind to *constater*—to register, that is—not to theorise along Utopian lines. Owing apparently to some freak of his character, or to some social malaise, Mr. Reynolds seems to have abandoned suddenly his contacts with what he calls contemptuously "The cultured classes," and to have taken up his quarters in the cottage of a Devonshire fisherman. Here it seems that he has definitely supported himself for several years by acting as mate to the fisherman in question, and by rowing summer visitors for hire. Such a career, if it do not argue a disposition more romantic than that of any other boy who runs away to sea, should at least suffice to prove that Mr. Reynolds' nature is no ordinary one.

HIS attitude, since he writes for that very cultured world he so much despises, is one of unreasonable and jaunty aggression. He flings, as it were, his cap into his reader's face at the very outset; being a scientist he utters his theory with a dogmatism that is a little distressing to ears used to a finer note, but his

* "A Poor Man's House." By Stephen Reynolds. (London: John Lane. 6*s*.)

attitude is no doubt due to youth—though we are uncertain as to the author's age; his dogmatism is due to his scientific training, to his consciousness that he knows his subject.

He knows his subject:

"For his first marriage and towards setting up house Tony succeeded in saving twenty shillings." [Tony is the fisherman whose assistant Mr. Reynolds became.]

"He gave it to his mother in gold to keep safely for him, and the day before the wedding he asked for it. 'Yu knows we an't got no bloody sovereigns,' said his father. It had all been spent in food and clothes for the younger children. So Tony went to sea that night and earned five shillings. A shilling of that too he gave to his mother; then started off on foot for the village where his girl was living and awaiting him. She had a little saved up: he knew that, though he feared it might have gone like his. They were married, however; they fed, rejoiced, and joked; and 'for to du the thing proper like,' they hired a trap to drive them home. With what money was left they embarked on married life, and their children made no unreasonable delay about coming. 'Aye!' says Tony, 'I'd du the same again—though 'twas hard times often.'

"Before I left Seacombe I asked a fisherman's wife, who was expecting her sixth or seventh child, whether she had enough money in hand to go through with it all; for I knew that her husband was unlikely to earn anything just then. 'I have,' she said, 'an' p'raps I an't. It all depends. If everything goes all right, I've got enough to last out, but if I be so ill as I was wi' the last one, what us lost, then I an't. Howsbeever, I don't want nort now. Us'll see how it turns out.' She went on setting her house in order, preparing baby-linen and making ready to 'go up over,' with perfect courage and tranquillity. When one thinks of the average educated woman's fear of childbed, although she can have doctors, nurses, anæsthetics and every other alleviation, the contrast is very great, more especially as the fisherman's wife had good reason to anticipate much pain and danger, in addition to the possibility of her money giving out.

"Those are not extraordinary instances, chosen to show how courageous people can be sometimes; on the contrary, they are quite ordinary illustrations of a general attitude among the poor towards life. To express it in terms of a theory which in one form or another is accepted by nearly all thinkers—the poor have not only the *Will to Live*, they have the *Courage to Live*."

This passage gives a sufficient taste, both of Mr. Reynolds's singular powers of observation and of his philosophic methods. His deductions we could have spared, but inasmuch as it was probably what Mr. Reynolds would call his *Will to make Deductions* which buoyed him up to make his very admirable observations, to refuse to tolerate the one for the sake of the other would be an act of perversity. Mr. Reynolds writes of the poor man with a comprehension that is all the more valuable because it is inspired with a great tenderness.

Aspects of the Social Question

By R. B. Cunninghame Graham

I HAVE often thought that the present position of society is like that of society in Rome at the time when Christianity first began to be a subject of conversation amongst the upper classes. Everything was breaking down, and though intelligent people saw that this was the case, no one could propose a remedy. The difficulty of feeding the population, so often referred to by the later Roman writers, was almost a parallel to our question of the unemployed. What puzzled economists then, as it does now, was the fact that the earth still brought forth its fruits in abundance, and that never had luxury been more rampant. Nobody seems to have seen that it was a question of distribution of wealth, and not of its production. How many see it to-day? It is not to be thought that the Christians (as far as we know from their writings) had any definite perception of what really was happening around them. They saw that something was wrong, and in the main, instead of attacking the disease at its root, they endeavoured by sobriety, thrift, abstinence and simple living to deal with the symptoms.

Had they but continued as they began a century before the time to which I have alluded, they would have solved the problem by their communistic life. This would probably not have allowed life to develop on the same lines which it has followed, and I only adduce the fact to disarm criticism from the religious point of view.

So far the parallel. Now for a question. Socrates, I often think, must have had for one of his ancestors a Scottish slave, his method was so similar to that of ours. What would you think of any doctor, who in treating a disease, after repeated outbursts of symptoms, which left the patient always weaker, insisted on treating symptoms as diseases, and never thought that in the patient's constitution there must be a fault? Still all our doctors, Liberals and Tories, both alike insist on pottering on with the mere symptoms of the case. Ever since 1887, the year in which I first came into contact with the unemployed, at each recurring winter want of employment has been felt. No prosperous spurt of trade has (since that time) ever absorbed all the men without work into the ranks of those who work full time.

At the beginning of this month (September 1908), for the first time just after harvest, when usually there is full work for all, have we seen bands of unemployed in every street of every town, not only in every street of every town in England and in Scotland but in all streets of every town in Europe and America. This does away with the assumption that Free Trade or Protection has anything to do with the phenomena, for distress is as keen in the Protectionist States as in those in which Free Trade prevails.

What then is the state of things ? It looks as if the commercial system under which we live was breaking down, and about to make way for something else. It is not to be taken that there is anything divine about our present system, either from the moral, economic, political, or any other point of view. It is at best a makeshift. Our grandfathers were only just emerging from a state of things, when we were children, which, no doubt, many then thought to be established from on high. Nevertheless, the Reform Bill rang its knell and it departed unhonoured, unwept and unregretted, except from the artistic point of view. So it will be with ours, in spite of protestations from those most interested to prevent all change. The chiefest symptom in the decay of the commercial—go as you please—worship of wealth and of success—and devil take the hindmost state of things under which we live—is the perpetual presence of the unemployed. Let no one think that after winter all will return to its old state, and once again the honest master drive up to his manufactory in his motor-car with a light heart, confident that all is well, and that his slaves are happy and content to make him rich. No doubt work will be found for some, but the roots of the cancer will still be in the flesh. To extirpate them there appears to me only one remedy . . . Socialism; but if there is a better, now is the time for the inventor to produce it, for the need during the coming winter will be great. What we immediately want is a scheme whereby men out of work may be kept through the winter, not by charity, for charity abases him who takes, and equally degrades the giver, who by his giving thinks himself a God (and acts accordingly); but by remunerative work. The Premier, under the stimulus of an election, has declared that he is going to deal with the whole question of the unemployed, as he says, drastically. Up till the moment of the election, the Government had been apparently sleeping, or peradventure dreaming, or pursuing various little Bills. It wanted riots (and an election) to bring them down from the clouds of commonplace to the firm ground of fact. Nothing is really less practical than commonplace, or anything less weighty than

your four-a-penny "serious men." In the majority of cases their stupid seriousness is mere buffoonery, and twenty thousand of their brains would not weigh down the *pia mater* of a guinea-pig. No doubt the assembled wisdom of the nation will be forced (force is the only thing that ever makes them think, and to think they have to be encouraged *à tergo* with a boot) to propose some scheme or other, such as afforestation, or the reclamation of waste land upon the estuaries of rivers or the like. These sort of schemes are admirable enough in the day of little things. What seems most certain (judging from the past) is that the proposals will be conceived with the presumption that the distress is temporary. If so, they are bound to fail. All points to the probability that the distress is permanent, or if not permanent, at least bound to be with us in a greater or a less degree till the whole fabric of society is changed. It is also probable that any scheme the present Government is likely to evolve will be half of a charitable kind, and that the workers will be offered wages of a charitable kind—that is to say, below trade-union rates. Such a scheme will not commend itself to self-respecting men. It is vain to talk about expense, these men, somehow or other, must be kept, either by charity, by local or by national expenditure. Whilst not disparaging anything that may be proposed of a local character, and merely saying, in passing, that afforestation cannot be made remunerative for at least twenty years, and has the defect of assembling large bodies of men, from towns, in camps far from their homes, I venture to believe that the true palliative scheme (when it is found) should be remunerative, both to the country and to the men employed.

The scheme I had the honour to propose to the Town Council of Glasgow was the making of motor roads. All of us know that the existing roads are quite inadequate for the new conditions which have come about. Each week brings us its butcher's bill. No one on foot on horseback or on a bicycle is safe. House property on many roads is much deteriorated. Gardens are ruined, and the pleasure of the country spoiled. Two hundred years ago (for most of our existing roads were begun about that time) our ancestors were face to face with the same problem that faces us to-day. They solved it, by degrees, and at an expenditure (extending over two hundred years) of about sixty million pounds, according to some statisticians. Surely what they could solve, we with our greater riches and industrial appliances can at least attack.

The County Councils practically own all the roads, and are

responsible for their upkeep. Surely it is not good policy for them to let their property deteriorate? Nothing, apparently, should be easier than either by a local or imperial rate, or by a tax on motors, to raise sufficient funds. Each County Council could work a section under the supervision of the central authority. In this way thousands of men could soon be set to work upon a permanent improvement which every man can see must shortly be undertaken either by the State or else by private means.

That it would take a long time to begin I utterly deny, when I remember how quickly a Coercion Bill can be run through the House. That it is too expensive I cannot see, when but eight years ago we spent three hundred millions upon our military picnic in the Transvaal. The matter presses and if something is not done this winter there will be violence and riots, for it is not to be supposed that men will starve indefinitely between whole avenues of butchers' shops. No one wants violence or riots, and if there is a man who has a better scheme than mine, let him declare it, for Time is ripe.

L'Envoi

Since writing the above the Government has proposed various plans; but clearly from a wish to gain time and not from any real desire to attack the problem seriously. Meanwhile the unemployed still parade the streets, and a spirit is afloat in the country unknown since the days of the Chartists.

II

How it Feels to be Out of Work

By W. H. Davies

It is generally in spring or summer that a man out of work takes courage to leave his friends and seek work in strange places. He can, and does, somehow manage, with the assistance of relatives, friends and landladies to get food and shelter in winter, but no sooner does the air begin to brighten in spring than he must feel more independence; and if he still cannot get work at home, he obeys the old lust to wander, even as a dog goes hunting. His hands begin to itch for something to do, and it is

now a matter of chance whether he is to be a working man or a real beggar. So he takes to the road, not doubting but what he will soon find work and settle, until such time as better trade in his native town beckons him to return.

Very well then; he has a shilling or two in his pocket, which his friends have mustered for him, and he leaves his native place. He is quite happy, for it never once occurs to him that work is not to be had—if honestly sought.

At this stage of his career the man no sooner hears of work being done than he hastens in that direction. If he sees a gang of men mending a road, or hoeing potatoes, the poor fellow not only asks for work immediately but, being told there is none for him, stands spellbound, without power to leave that sight of industry; while real beggars pass indifferently to and fro, laughing in their sleeves at all labouring men.

This man is now so interested in work of every kind that he even addresses little children. "Hallo!" says he, "what does father work at?" On being told he asks a second question, "Is he working?" After receiving information he goes his way, feeling better satisfied than before. These questions are asked out of real respect for work and not, as some people would think, for the sake of giving a child pleasure in answering them. It is far different with the real tramp, for he is not interested in work and seldom speaks to children. Again, there is something about his manner that is not so open as the other's, and children fear him, and he knows it well.

To this innocent man out of work there are no real tramps; for he thinks that every man is looking anxiously for work; so it can be imagined how he amuses those real beggars, who have no other object in inquiring for work than to know what places to avoid.

This new tramp begins to feel distressed when several weeks go by and still there is no prospect of work. He sees his shoes wearing away and his clothes beginning to change colour, and he does not know whether to return home or not. It is well for him that he has that strange fortune which guides staggering drunkards safely past glass windows and looks after infants that tumble downstairs; for this man—to the astonishment of real beggars—is continually being assisted one way or another. Every day he has an experience to tell of how some gentleman drove him part of the way in a trap, how another gave him sixpence, and a woman gave him threepence and a parcel of food. How does all this come about? Even real beggars, who go systematically to work, cannot tell, for they seldom get more than a penny at

a time. The reason is that the real beggar whines in such humble tones that people would feel no shame in giving him a farthing. But this new beggar, not yet having lost the dignity and pride of a respectable human being, addresses them in such an open, manly way that a penny seems small indeed to offer such a man—and this is one reason for his success.

Again, he does not miss good opportunities, as the real beggar often does. This new beginner, being a respectable man, unfortunate for the time in being out of work, seldom thinks of the police. Why should he? He does not beg straight; but his innocent roundabout way of inquiring for work—which he really wants—is more profitable than straight begging would be. In his innocence, he does not suspect all tall men are detectives or constables in private clothes, and pass them by, as real tramps often do. The consequence is that he gets assistance from them—even if they are detectives.

Of course this man soon begins to see that the life of a man out of work is not so terrible after all. He gets enough to eat, and is free to go his way, and he has no responsibilities. A fine healthy appetite compensates for the low quality of his food; for he will now relish plain bread and cheese as he never relished the beef-steak and onions of his former days. Day after day he passes before strange eyes, and therefore has no need to study appearances. He loses all fret, and settles himself to a wandering life. He cannot fail to see how happy are the real beggars he meets on the road and in lodging-houses—and he soon becomes indifferent to work.

Although this man may become too indifferent to look for work, that is not to say that he will not take advantage of a good offer. A number of tramps do this, but if they have had a thorough taste of the road, they can never be relied on in after days. They hear the call of the road much the same as sailors working on land hear the call of the sea. Such a man is not to be trusted, even though he marries; for he is likely to welcome any slight provocation at home or at work, and take to the road again, deserting wife and little ones. I have often heard of men in a respectable position that boasted—to make their success in business look more important—that they had once been tramps on the road, but it is always to be found that the experiences of such men were limited to a week or two; and that they never properly filled their lungs with the air of freedom. It would be very difficult to find a man in a respectable position that had been for a whole summer a free wanderer.

I really cannot imagine any better life on earth than to be

free of all tasks and duties ; free, morning and night, to rise and retire at one's pleasure. Nothing amuses me more than to read of the activity of some of our leading men ; how they are always trying with all their might to make up the time they wasted as babes in their mothers' arms, and in idle play in fields and streets.

III

A Complete Actuarial Scheme for Insuring John Doe against all the Vicissitudes of Life

By A. M.

[*It had been our intention to offer some comments on the Governmental plan for dealing with the question of Unemployment. Since, however, the Government's proposals are merely palliative for the present, it seems better to reserve any comments. But in order to make our own tribute of suggestion to the problem of the working classes of the country we have put to a mathematician the following case :*

The State desires to secure one John Doe, a member of the proletariat, against all human vicissitudes but upon lines that are financially sound—to afford him, that is to say, a State Insurance Office against : (a) *old age ;* (b) *in the case of his death against the destitution of his widow ;* (c) *against illness ; and* (d) *unemployment. It appears to us that if the State can do this at least one side of the social problem will be solved. We append the first part of his reply, dealing with the provision of contributory old age pensions to John Doe, or in the case of his death to his widow, and we append to this answer a tabular statement of the calculations upon which it is based.*]

We wish to enable the labouring man to provide against destitution in old age, and to do this by his own exertions, with only such assistance as will make them effective. Such provision must cover, besides himself, his wife, or any other person, who, in the service of his home, has parted with the power to provide for herself.

For example, take the common case of a sister who gives up a well-paid place to look after the children of her brother, a widower. In what follows the word " wife " must be understood to include any such person.

The independent woman must also be able to provide for herself. The professional man, in touch with skilled opinion, obtains a high rate of interest on his savings, and thus needs no assistance. Let us suppose that the State puts the labourer into the same position by allowing such interest on his contributions towards his pension.

The State may require such contributions to begin early, and to be regular, with permission to make good arrears caused by illness or want of employment. The payments will continue until the total, with compound interest up to some appointed age, will purchase an annuity at least sufficient to prevent destitution.

Take a possible case.

Put the appointed age at sixty, and the rate of interest at 5 per cent., paid half-yearly.

First suppose the man to be the ordinary fairly prosperous workman.

Take an unmarried man of twenty, earning good wages. He can pay one shilling a week.

At twenty-five he marries a wife aged twenty, and joins her name to his own in the pension account. His wants are now larger, but his earning power is at the highest, and the wife may contribute something to the family income. So he continues to pay one shilling a week till he is thirty. But he is no longer able to make good all arrears. Suppose that he fails to do so for a fortnight in each year on the average. At thirty his family has increased. And when his children begin to earn money his own powers are failing. So from thirty to fifty he pays sixpence a week (for fifty weeks in the year, as before). After the age of fifty he ceases to pay, as he has a sufficient sum to his credit. The result of his providence is that at sixty he is credited with £216 2*s.* 5*d.* With this he may now buy his annuity. We may give him some liberty of choice as to its conditions. First suppose that his wife is still living. She will not be entitled to any pension till she is sixty, and the husband therefore sixty-five.

The man can still earn a little money, so he need not take his full annuity at once. And the annuity may be reduced after the death of one of them.

The sum of £215 4*s.* will buy, at age sixty, a mixed annuity of four shillings a week till the man reaches sixty-five; eight shillings a week during the joint life of man and wife after the man is sixty-five and the wife sixty; and five shillings a week to th survivor.

Or the man may postpone till he is sixty-one and then receive five shillings a week till sixty-five, and the rest as before; or any other suitable combination.

The man may die between sixty and sixty-five. Then the wife, when she reaches sixty, receives the five shillings a week to the survivor.

Now suppose that the man is a widower at sixty. He may buy an annuity of *7s. 6d.* a week at once; or postpone for one year if he is able to support himself, and then receive eight shillings a week; or postpone again for a still higher annuity; or he may take five shillings a week at once, rising to nine shillings at sixty-five.

But the State's assistance should cease if the prospective pension reaches ten shillings a week. Interest at 2½ per cent. may be allowed on sums beyond the price of such annuity.

Now suppose that the man dies before he is sixty. The sum standing in the joint names is then transferred to the widow's sole account, and accumulates for her, with any additions she may make, till she is sixty.

If the payments have finished at the man's death, the widow at sixty is credited with *£277 18s. 6d.*, the price of an annuity of *9s. 10d.* a week. If the man dies earlier, the widow is credited with whatever sum stands in the joint account, and must add to it herself enough to buy her annuity. The younger the man dies, the less is the sum transferred, but the longer the time the widow has to increase it. And she need not provide for the joint annuity. If the widow marries again, her account is joined to her new husband's. The rule that the State will not assist beyond a limit of ten shillings a week will prevent joint accounts rising too high. In no case should credit be transferred to another account, unless there has been a genuine relation of dependency between the parties. Otherwise the money should lapse to the State. This introduces the tontine principle, which indeed has already entered into the valuation of the mixed annuity.

But it comes in only after provision has been made for the wife. The contributor no more loses than the man who insures his life at twenty-five for his wife's benefit and then dies a widower at ninety.

So much for man and wife. An independent woman, who pays sixpence a week from twenty to fifty, will be credited at sixty with *£142 18s. 9d.*, which will purchase an annuity of five shillings a week, if we allow her the male rate. But what of those whose payments are not sufficient to buy annuities large enough to support them? The man who has to his credit

at sixty some considerable proportion of the sum required, and is still able to support himself, must postpone purchase till the increase by accumulation of interest and the rise in the rate of annuity as age advances combine to bring the requisite weekly income within his reach.

And the young man especially must be made to understand that the more he neglects his payments the later will he take his pension.

The mere wastrel we need not consider, but there remain those who fail to keep up their payments from long illness destroying the earning power, or from genuine inability to find employment. Now sums credited to those who die before sixty, leaving no dependent, lapse to the State. The money thus at the State's disposal may be used :

(1) To reduce the cost to the State.

(2) To reduce the price of the annuities generally.

(3) To assist this last class, by granting them their pensions at an earlier age, or at a higher rate. In the case of continued ill-health this may be cheaply done, as the "bad life" already reduces the cost of the annuity.

There remain those unlucky men who give their best years to learning a trade only to find too late that their trade has ceased to be able to support them. Here, again, let the State permit any such decayed industry to qualify its workers for pensions at some earlier age, equal to those earned at sixty, by the more fortunate, and make up the difference in price out of the lapsed accounts. We may briefly consider the cost to the State.

Of the 5 per cent. interest 2½ may be found by investment in Government stock, and more if the scope of such investment is enlarged. And the transference of stock from the outside holder to the Pension Department will reduce the necessity for a sinking fund. If the burden of the remainder is still too heavy, the interest allowed must be reduced to 4½ per cent. But this will involve raising the pension age to sixty-five.

And finally any scheme that is effective will cost the State at least as much as this one.

Table A

A man pays 1*s.* a week from his twentieth birthday till his twenty-fifth.

Amount	£14.7418

This accumulates till his sixtieth birthday.

Amount	£83.9888

He marries at twenty-five a woman of twenty. He pays 1*s.* a week from twenty-fifth to thirtieth birthdays except for a fortnight in each year.

Amount £14.1749

Which accumulates till sixtieth birthday.

Amount £62.3644

He pays 6*d.* a week from thirtieth to fortieth birthdays except for a fortnight in each year.

Amount £16.1596

Which accumulates till sixtieth birthday.

Amount £43.2900

He does the same from fortieth to fiftieth birthdays.

Amount £16.1596

Which accumulates till sixtieth birthday.

Amount £26.4778

His whole credit at sixtieth birthday—

Amount £216.1110

A woman putting by 6*d.* a week from age twenty to fifty would be entitled at sixty to £142.9442, which will provide an annuity of 5*s.* a week at man's rate of annuity.

Annuity A, 4*s.* a week to man if alive from sixtieth to sixty-fifth birthdays.

He requires an annuity of 4*s.* a week while he is over sixty and his wife under sixty (or 5*s.* after sixty-one), 8*s.* a week while he and his wife are both living and over sixty, and 5*s.* a week to the survivor. The price of the whole, allowing for the probabilities of the possible contingencies, is £215.1966.

Man alone living may buy annuity of 7*s.* 6*d.* a week or postpone for one year and take then 8*s.* a week, or postpone again with further increase; or he may take 5*s.* a week at once rising to 9*s.* a week at sixty-five.

Woman alone living when man who died between fifty and sixty would have reached sixty may not take annuity till she reaches sixty, when her credit will have increased to £277.927, which will buy her an annuity of 9*s.* 10*d.* a week.

(To be continued)

The Personality of the German Emperor

By À-D.

[We have received the enclosed communication from an esteemed contributor and, in accordance with his request, have taken particular pains that the English rendering should be idiomatic and exact.]

"The main function of the English Review"—as you inform me—" being to discover where Great Britain stands if the discovery can be made," it is obvious that the month has contained no topic more interesting than the interview with the German Emperor which was reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, and this not so much because it casts any light upon where your nation does stand as because it probably disturbs all your preconceived ideas. You have been asked to go over again in your minds the whole of the periods, so painful for your country, of Magersfontein, of the Tugela River, of Spion Kop. There loom up before you the figures of France treacherous, of Russia sinister, of Germany harsh and arrogant. Perhaps this stirring up of things half forgotten is beneficent; perhaps it is tragic. But upon the whole, however it may be as regards the other nations, I beg that you will permit me to point out to you that the impression we receive with regard to Great Britain's position is one sufficiently consoling for you, and that things change so quickly that past treacheries, if there were treacheries, so long as they achieved nothing at the time, matter very little now. The traditional policies of Russia and France have been broken in two since 1900. Great Britain's position has hardened, strengthened and crystallised itself. It is difficult to say how any nation is regarded abroad; it is safe only to hazard the statement that England is regarded with more friendliness than was the case, let us say, five years ago. Looking at the matter from a standpoint that is, as you are aware, sufficiently aloof, I should say that she is considered as a Power upon the whole benevolent and as disinterested as any Great Power can be. Whatever may be the facts of the German Emperor's pronouncement, it can do little more than strengthen this impression; for whilst the three other Powers concerned are vigorously accusing each other of treachery to Great Britain, Great Britain at least presents the spectacle of a nation in adversity whom conspirators

beset. The days when *perfide* was the adjective inseparable from the name of "Albion" had faded already a little into the background before October 28, 1908; by the 29th they became almost ludicrous, and the image that we have of Great Britain in 1900 is that of a rather sick John Bull with some footpads in the background of the cartoon. For that, if for no other reason, you should thank the German Emperor.

As regards two of the other nations, in spite of calculated indiscretions, we must remain quite in the dark. The case of Germany is much more clear. With regard to both France and Russia, we are dealing with dark horses. That the attitude of France at the present moment is friendly we have not the remotest doubt. It is one of the things which most console us, which, if anything would, would prove to us the perfectibility of human nature. For that France and England should be estranged and should fail to comprehend the one the other at this date would be a matter of tears, since in these two nations the traditions and the civilisations are the latest and most stable, the most developed of any of the Great Powers. With France and England friendly, possibilities of human development, in the realm of culture at least, exist. Were they ever to become estranged, the possibility would vanish for the time being. And there is no need to concern ourselves with the actions of France in the past, since for France too, even as for Russia, the whole political and diplomatic *personnel* has undergone so singular a change, and indeed, though diplomatic traditions may possibly continue, the goddess of diplomacy has but one face, and that is set towards the future. The vivacious correspondent of the *Echo de Paris* may and possibly does possess access to diplomatic sources of information. Count Mouravieff may have held certain interviews with certain French diplomatists on passing through Paris on November 7, 1899. We may doubt the motives of these revelations, their veracity or their completeness (we do not say that we need doubt them or that we do); we simply know that it is the custom to treat the public as children, who are permitted to know what, in the revealers' minds, it is expedient that they should know. (By saying this I do not wish to throw any doubt upon the good intentions of the revealers.)

The position of Germany is entirely different. The man who makes the revelations from the German side is a sufficiently known personality; of what his motives may be I am naturally as ignorant as I am of the motives of M. X., since it is almost impossible for any man to analyse to the bottom even his own motives. But this is the limitation of our knowledge; for the

rest it is not going too far to say that we know the German Emperor as intimately as it is possible to know any public man. His enunciation, his short rapid sentences, his direct gaze, his direct methods of saying what at the moment he thinks, all these things are as familiar to us as is the figure of a policeman at one of your street corners. In the one sense, his Majesty is a very modern figure, in another he is a character of the eighteenth century. In this he represents his nation; his Empire he represents less well. For Prussia, of which he is king, is a simple entity, half modern, half primæval. Germany is a baffling complexity. In certain kingdoms she is ancient in traditions and civilisations, in virtues and in vices; in certain principalities she is ruthlessly and brutally modern, though from day to day this characteristic is modifying itself. It has never been sufficiently clear to the British people that the German Empire is a collection of units which widely differ, under the hegemony of a definite and simple unit. Great Britain does perhaps well to neglect this aspect in considering its relations with the German Empire, for at least in her international contact the German Empire speaks with a fairly unanimous voice. At the same time the union of the German Empire is one of self-interest rather than of sentiment, and it is natural (because under this same hegemony of Prussia the commercial prosperity of the Empire has been so continuously increasing) that Germany, as distinct from the federation of States, from Elssas-Lothringen to Schleswig-Holstein and from Hamburg to the borders of Galicia, is beginning to evolve a genuine national sentiment of its own. After the war of 1870—if I may permit myself an image—Prussia offered to its allies a certain pudding, and the proof of this pudding has been in the eating.

This of course is a digression: the point to be kept in mind is that in all international matters Germany as a rule speaks with one voice, and this the voice of one man—his Royal and Imperial Majesty William the Second. It is impossible to be in the same room with the German Emperor without being aware that one is in the presence of a stirring and a disturbing being. I have said that his Majesty was compounded, like his kingdom, of two very separate entities. On the one hand he is a modern of the moderns, on the other he is a figure from the eighteenth century. Confronted with him for the first time you are struck with the determination of his sentiments, of his speech, of his mannerisms. Upon any given subject his ideas seem settled, hardened and unalterable. He might be his ancestor, Frederick the First

of Prussia. But at the third or fourth contact with his Majesty, particularly if he happens to recur to a former topic without recollecting that he has previously discoursed upon that subject, be it Art, Assyriology, stand-shooting or the exploits of his ancestors of the Mark of Brandenburg—the moment his Majesty reverts to such a topic after an interval of time, you are struck with astonishment to discover that from this given set of circumstances he will have deduced, as likely as not, an entirely new train of ideas. I do not mean to say that he will directly contradict himself; but to give an example: In the case of Assyriology—in which subject his Majesty was lately most ardently interested—at one moment he declared that the value of the study of Assyrian habits is purely military, to the exclusion of all other aspects of Assyrian life; and at another time we have heard him declare that Assyrian military matters are completely negligible, the whole value of Assyrian civilisation centering in the Art of that extinct population. You should remember, too, that his Majesty is bilingual; he speaks German with a strong English accent, and English with a strong German one, and he has no very exact sense of the meaning of words. You know for yourself how extremely difficult it is to express one's self with any nicety upon delicate questions. It is, in fact, possible for his Majesty to make fairly evident to you, when you are conversing with him, more or less the exact shade of enthusiasm that he feels at the moment, for then he can emphasise his expressions with those direct glances of his eyes, with that heightening or lowering of his voice that comes from the chest, and that occasional gesture of his arm. But, as I am only too well aware, the effects of written words are totally distinct from those uttered with the mouth. His Majesty is, moreover, and perhaps before all things, an Idealist* of the moment. I do not know, and probably in the nature of things I never shall know, what suggestions his Majesty may have made with regard to your plan of campaign in the Boer War, but it is fairly easy to make various hypotheses. His Majesty was undoubtedly extremely interested in the war while it progressed. He studied it as carefully as possible; he discussed it with many, perhaps all, his military *entourage*. He may have written an exceedingly detailed account of what would be a good course for Field-Marshal Lord Roberts to pursue; he may have—and it is not unlikely—exhausted whole sheets of large notepaper. On the other hand—and this is the most probable speculation—

* Our correspondent writes words of which the exact translation would be "rapidly changing sentimentalist."—Ed. E. R.

he may have written to your late Queen merely five or six words, such as "Why does not Lord Roberts use mules instead of donkeys?" (I am quite unacquainted with military matters.) But these six words for an Idealist, such as his Majesty, in the moment of the afflatus of friendship for England that he very often feels, would be sufficient to let him say, "Here is proof of my friendship for England"; it would be sufficient—supposing Lord Roberts to have substituted the mules for the donkeys—to have let him at the time of the interview imagine that he really had been the instrument of entirely changing the British fortunes during that conflict. As any direct evidence of facts, the interview is meaningless. His Majesty is of such a disposition as to take what I believe you would call a "sporting interest" in an immense number of subjects, one of the most of which is war. He is a modern man in this—for the modern man sympathises with anything, from whatever aspect—and it would not at all surprise me to discover that whilst he was making suggestions to Lord Roberts he was making them also to Generals Joubert and De Wet. There is, from the private point of view, nothing criminal or mean in this. The Kaiser, with his traditions of an English gentleman, desires to see the best side win. He is keenly interested in both sides. This is a characteristic inconvenience—as only too many of us know—in the higher diplomacy, but it is one of the things that endears him to his people, for, believe me, the attitude of his people towards the Kaiser is one of family affection. At the moment when I write this the Kaiser is being rated as if he were a prodigal son or an imprudent cousin, but by the time you have put this into print the balance will be sweeping back and his family, who are his people, will applaud him. In much the same way I have known a family, whose pockets have been somewhat depleted by a dashing nephew, to feel violent resentment against him at the moment when they first felt the sting in their pockets, and yet to regain their pride, when they discovered that the matter is not as bad as it might be. After all, do we not call our sons "little wretches" for beating drums whilst we are at work; yet we rejoice, a little later on, that they take so aptly to a military implement. So that interview gives us merely certain hypotheses to go upon. One fact, however, it brings out. The interview itself was not one interview, but was a set of jottings of conversations with his Majesty. These conversations extended over a period of many days and resume the impressions of several years. From this fact we may gather that for a fairly protracted period of time his Majesty was in an attitude of strongly

emotional friendship for your country. It is this, it seems to me, that you should lay hold of, and if you will remember what I have written above—his Majesty's frequent changes of attitude, his difficulty in expressing himself reasonably in print, for his Majesty's expressions when they reach that stage offer as much an exaggeration of his real meaning as most caricatures do of his actual person—if you will consider all these points, two facts will stand out in your mind. One is that his Majesty, whose opinions fluctuate so often and so strongly, has maintained for a long time the illusion that he is friendly to England. Perhaps, then, this is not an illusion, but a settled habit of mind. The other is that his Majesty is in many ways unfortunate. He is hardly able, on account of his own disposition, to listen to advice. He is a very lonely man. He has had extremely sad experiences in men he thought he could trust. Not the least of these unfairnesses has been the publication of this interview, for the very easily identifiable writer must have known, as well as we know to-day, that his Majesty's utterances would have caused not only intense dissatisfaction to his subjects, not only intense consternation in the European nations, but a singular indifference in your island. For though his Majesty's rhetoric very well represents the methods of speech of his subjects when their waistcoats are unbuttoned, at the dinner table, or when, on the pedestals of statues that they have unveiled they let themselves go, as you would say, the whole tone of English conversation and of English writings is set in a key so much lower that—as the interviewer very well knew—his Majesty's emphatics must seem almost a proof of insincerity. And removed as I now am from the diplomatic arena, I am lost in astonishment that a man usually esteemed reputable and a paper with a record so honourable as your *Daily Telegraph's* should have exposed this lonely and very ill-served man to a bear-baiting that morally he did not deserve. Whether or not the subsequent revelations as to the method in which the interview was passed by the Foreign Office have in them any truth at all, I leave to your own imagination and knowledge of the world, with a single comment that if they be true his Majesty is very ill-served. If they are untrue he is served still worse. If I close my eyes I seem to see William the Second as a Southern Frenchman, for you will remember without doubt the passage at the end of Alphonse Daudet's "Port Tarascon," where that author says that the meridional before the great downfall of France was accustomed to say—I have forgotten the exact words—that there were always tens of thousands of spectators at the *Course des*

Taureaux. After 1870 he would say that it was a miserable spectacle, with no more attendance than would go under his hat; so it is with the German Emperor; so it seems to me it is with most moderns as well. The world becomes more and more sensitive and more and more apt to sway from one extreme to another. That this tendency should have penetrated into the serene realm of diplomacy, where once, being men of the world, we accepted exaggerated statements with a profound silence of respect and discounted them with the automatic regularity of calculating machines—this tendency seems to me the most lamentable of modern characteristics. But this is not the topic upon which you requested me to communicate with you, and I will play in a retirement more discreet the part of *Laudator temporis acti.* I only request that if ever you should desire to interview me, you will have it done by a person with a sense of fair play and some of the attributes of a gentleman, and that in printing this communication, if you observe in it any turns of thought that will not clearly convey my exact meaning to your countrymen, you will take what steps you think fit to amend these defects.

Translated by I. v. A.

Notes on the Balkans, with a Table

By Henry W. Nevinson

When I returned from Constantinople nearly two years ago and said I believed Turkey was going to do her own reforms, I was laughed to scorn by every authority on the Near East. I had myself conversed secretly with Young Turkish leaders, and I knew their hopes and something of their organisation. But the idea that rather negative and incapable "intellectuals," who for the most part lived as exiles in Paris, could effect a clearance in the lumber and corruption of the Sultan's Government appeared so impossible that, after a few attempts at persuasion, I held my peace.

Even the Young Turkish Congress in Paris last Christmas attracted the notice of only one or two careful observers; the Powers continued their inane reforms, and the races of Macedonia continued their mutual assassinations. England had just agreed with Russia, as a counsel of despair, to advise that a

slaughtering Turkish force should clear the country of slaughter, when, suddenly in July, the miraculous change came. Monastir mutinied, Turkish troops took to the hills at Resna, a few miles west; the gallant old Turkish General Shemsi was assassinated by his officers; a few others were assassinated; Ochrida, Resna, and Monastir were occupied by rebels; an Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress arose at Salonica; stride by stride the movement approached Constantinople; trembling for life, Abdul Hamid, who had held lives so cheap, proclaimed the Midhat's Constitution of 1876; Turkish military bands practised the "Marseillaise"; mutual murderers embraced in the public squares; unrighteousness and war kissed each other on the scenes of massacre; and in half a dozen weeks the most incredible miracle of history was accomplished. The Sheikh-ul-Islam gave it his blessing; the clergy and softas spread its gospel; the wise old Kiamil became its Grand Vizier; the army was its agent, and heaven smiled to welcome new-born peace.

But "the most interested Powers" were unlike heaven and did not smile. If Turkey ceased to rot, she might never drop, and then how were the Powers to round off their Empires? When relatives outside a death-chamber are discussing the probabilities of the will, it is very upsetting if the dying man walks in, sound and hearty and good for twenty years at least. The murmured congratulations then have a touch of embarrassment. The thankfulness for his restoration cannot be truly thankful for what it is not about to receive.

We need not share the dark and deep suspicion that the German Ambassador suggested the exclusion of the Bulgarian Minister from a State banquet in Constantinople with the conscious intention of beginning strife. That exclusion was a trivial point, but it was the only mistake the Young Turks had made in their patriotism, and Bulgaria seized it at once. The recall of her Minister was immediately followed by the occupation of the Turkish Oriental Railway, running through the province of Eastern Roumelia, which had been incorporated with Bulgaria twenty-three years before, but still paid a tribute to Turkey. At the same time, Prince Ferdinand, an Austrian by birth and education, was welcomed with sovereign honours on a visit to Austrian dominions. He had long played the part of the man who would be king and dared not, and now, undoubtedly with Austria's connivance, and probably at her suggestion, he declared himself Tsar of an independent kingdom on October 5, and a scramble for Turkish property began.

Bulgaria had some excuse. Memory counts for a great deal in the Balkans, as is shown by the claims of various races to be the inheritors of Alexander's prowess, and the Bulgarians have a fine tradition of an empire, predominant throughout the peninsula in the tenth century. Certainly they are almost wholly Slav by race now, but they boast a name and ancestry of an unknown and conquering people. Also, they probably suffered more than any other province under the Old Turkish rule, and their sufferings were the ostensible cause of the Russo-Turkish War that led to the Treaty of Berlin. Their kinsmen, again, the Bulgarians who inhabit the majority of Macedonian villages, had suffered most both from Turks, Greeks, and Albanians during the last five or six terrible years of the Macedonian woe. Bulgaria had no reason to love the Turk, Young or Old, and, more than all, she had at great sacrifice prepared an excellently equipped and organised army, ready to mobilise 210,000 infantry, with 7000 cavalry, 500 Creusot guns, and a trained reserve of 170,000 within ten days. No instrument of war in the Balkans compares with Bulgaria's army, and in three days from the declaration of war it could almost certainly have encamped within striking distance of Constantinople.

The temptation was natural. Probably it would have been irresistible had not England sent a fleet to Lemnos as evidence of her support to the Young Turkish Government. In the middle of October, war would again have been certain had not England, in combination with France and Russia, advised Bulgaria to demobilise part of her forces on condition that Turkey did the same. The war would certainly have been popular, for, if the Turkish power is to revive, that was Bulgaria's last chance for many years of acquiring the large part of Macedonia which was promised to a "big Bulgaria" by the Russians in the San Stefano Treaty after the Russo-Turkish War and was refused in the Treaty of Berlin.

But war would have been not only a grave political mistake, but an outrage upon freedom. Apart from the tribute for Eastern Roumelia and the nominal command of a bit of railway by Turkey, Bulgaria was suffering absolutely nothing from her supposed suzerain. Whether her independence was declared now or in a year's time did not make the smallest difference to the people. Bulgaria's real danger does not come from Turkey, but from Russia, as Stambouloff clearly foresaw. Against Russia, Turkey is her natural ally, and to attack the Government of the new reform party at Constantinople was not merely to ruin a future friend, but to restore the Sultan and all his detestable

enormities, to bring about the very thing that the reactionary Powers most desired, to doom the Liberal movement in its infancy, to inflict an outrage upon freedom.

By her impatient aggression Bulgaria was playing the catspaw, possibly of Germany and Russia, certainly of Austria. The day after she declared her independence, Austria annexed the Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which she had been allowed to occupy and administer by the Treaty of Berlin. At the same time she undertook to withdraw her garrisons from the Turkish Sandjak of Novi-Bazar, a strip of mountain valley running from Herzegovina to the pass leading to Mitrovitza (whence the railway runs to Salonica) and having Servia on one side and Montenegro on the other. The concession was valueless, for if the Serbs of the two latter States were unfriendly, Austria could not hold the Sandjak; and if they were friendly, she could reoccupy it without effort. But the annexation was a serious matter. By this action Austria insulted Turkey and defied Europe. Those two considerations might not of themselves have been vital, for Turkey has had no real hold upon the provinces these thirty years, and Europe would not fight over a change of name from occupation to annexation. The danger lay in the spirit of the provinces themselves and in the passionate rage excited in Servia.

Though less than half the population is Orthodox (the rest being Roman Catholics or Mohammedan descendants of people early converted by the Turks), nearly all of them are Serbs by race. They come of the same Slav stock that poured over the Danube in the sixth century; they formed part of the great Servian Empire of the early fourteenth century, and they shared the complete overthrow of that Empire by the Turks on the terrible field of Kossovo in 1389. Admirably administered as the provinces were by the Austrian Baron von Kallay for the first twenty years of the occupation, and much as they have gained in education, roads, and other material developments, they maintain the steady opposition to Austrian supremacy which they displayed at the beginning, and boldly declare their preference even for Old Turkish rule. Travellers who marvel at their discontent forget, as is the English way, that man does not live by bread alone.

There are nearly 2,000,000 Servian-Slavs in the annexed provinces. East of them, just across the Drina, they have nearly 3,000,000 Servians proper, and south of them, in Montenegro, dwell about 250,000 descendants of the highest Servian families who escaped to the mountains after Kossovo and have maintained

their mountain freedom ever since. At the moment of writing, the danger-point in the Balkans has passed from Bulgaria to these relics of the Servian Empire—an empire once extending over the Sandjak of Novi-Bazar and stretching far down beyond the Turkish district of Kossovo that still bears the title of Old Servia, though Albanians have killed or expelled most of the Servians there. Of course the Servian fighting strength is small. It is doubtful if Servia herself could put more than 130,000 of all arms on the field, and they would be inadequately armed in rifles and guns, though some new quick-firing Creusot batteries arrived early in November. Montenegro, invincible in her mountains, has a nominal regular strength of about 40,000 men. The annexed provinces proved themselves troublesome in guerilla warfare thirty years ago. But such forces do not count against Austria-Hungary, who, in case of need, could probably mobilise armies of 2,000,000 men.

As was made obvious by the Servian Crown Prince's visit to St. Petersburg, the real importance of Servia's indignation arose from the Pan-Slavic feeling in Russia. Shall M. Isvolsky, cried the Russian press, be allowed to bargain away the liberties of Slavs on the chance of obtaining the passage of the Dardanelles for Russian warships ? Here are the two Slav provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina unlawfully swallowed up by a Germanising Power. Here are the Slavs of Servia suffocated within their narrow borders, cut off for ever from the sea, from their natural allies in Montenegro, and from all other possible extension. Here are the Slavs of Montenegro isolated for ever in like manner, and the Slavs of Old Servia and Macedonia deserted. Shall these things be, and is Pan-Slavism an empty dream ?

At the moment of writing, there lies the Balkan problem, plain for any one to read, though not to solve. Certainly there are outlying points—the European control of the Danube ; the policy of Roumania, where social discontent has lately risen high under an ageing Prussian King, who has also to watch the interests of the Roumanians scattered in Hungary and in Macedonia under the name of Vlachs ; the relation of Greece to the Greeks in the Turkish coast towns and the south of Macedonia ; the union of Crete to the Hellenic kingdom ; and the international position of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. But for Europe at large the immediate and vital questions are three : the possibility of peace and even friendship between Bulgaria and the Porte ; the possibility of restraining Russian Pan-slavism, worked upon as it is by Servian indignation ; and—deepest question of all—the possibility of maintaining the miracle of reform in the heart of the Turkish Empire.

Country.	Ruler.	Constitution.	Area.	Race.	Population.	Army.	Allies.	Aims and Interests.
Austria.	Francis Joseph.	Empire. Constitutional.	1,212,000 sq. m.	Teutonic, Slav, Czech.	27,000,000.	(Austro-Hungary) *circa* 2,250,000.	Germany, Bulgaria, and possibly Italy.	Supposed movement eastward, and old designs on port at Salonica.
Bulgaria.	Ferdinand.	Constitutional Prince or Tsar.	36,000 sq. m.	Mainly Slav now, but Bulgar origin uncertain.	3,700,000.	370,000.	Austria. **	Extension to a "big Bulgaria," including most of Macedonia.
Greece.	George.	King. Constitutional.	25,000 sq. m.	Levantine or Greek.	2,500,000.	120,000 (majority irregular).	Possibly Turkey, if against Bulgaria.	Extension in Macedonia and southern coasts of Turkey.
Hungary.	Francis Joseph.	King. Constitutional.	125,500 sq. m.	Magyar, but chiefly Slav and Roumanian.	20,000,000.	*See* Austria.	*See* Austria.	Outlet to Salonica.
Italy.	Victor Emmanuel.	King. Constitutional.	111,000 sq. m.	Latin.	33,000,000.	*Circa* 1,000,000 regular; *circa* 2,000,000 irregular.	Germany (?) Austria (?)	Extension on Albanian coast and possible recovery of Austrian Italy.
Montenegro.	Nicholas.	Prince. Absolute.	3500 sq. m.	Servian, Slav.	250,000.	*Circa* 40,000.	Russia and Servia.	Independence and a coast free from Austrian interference.
Roumania.	Charles.	King. Constitutional.	50,700 sq. m.	Mixed, Latin and Slav.	5,500,000.	170,000 regulars.	Uncertain. Servia (?) Russia probably.	To support Roumanians scattered in Macedonia and Hungary.
Russia.	Nicholas II.	Tsar. Absolute and nominally Constitutional.	8,500,000 sq. m.	Slav.	130,000,000.	2,700,000 organised, 1,300,000 unorganised.	Montenegro, Servia, France, possibly England.	To obtain free outlet for warships from the Black Sea.
Servia.	Peter.	King. Constitutional.	18,800 sq. m.	Slav.	2,500,000.	110,000 (?) indifferently armed.	Russia (?) Montenegro.	To obtain outlet on Adriatic and bind Servian races of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro together.
Turkey.	Abdul Hamid II.	Sultan. Constitutional.	1,100,000	Mixed; Ottoman, Greek, Bulgarian, Roumanian, Albanian.	25,000,000.	Organised and unorganised, *circa* 750,000.	Possibly Servia (?) Strong moral support of England to new *régime*.	To maintain integrity and reform administration.

REVIEWS

"L'Ile des Pingouins." Par Anatole France. (Paris: Calmann Lévy. 3 fr. 50.)

M. Anatole France, historian and adventurer, has given us many profitable histories of saints and sinners, of Roman procurators and of officials of the Third Republic, of *grandes dames* and of dames not so very grand, of ornate Latinists and of inarticulate street hawkers, of priests and generals—in fact, the history of all humanity as it appears to his penetrating eye, serving a mind marvellously incisive in its scepticism, and a heart that, of all contemporary hearts gifted with a voice, contains the greatest treasure of charitable irony. As to M. Anatole France's adventures, these are well known. They lie open to this prodigal world in four volumes describing the adventures of a choice soul amongst masterpieces. For such is the romantic view M. Anatole France takes of the life of a literary critic. History and adventure, then, seemed to be the chosen fields for the magnificent evolutions of M. Anatole France's prose; but no material limits can stand in the way of a genius. The latest book from his pen—which may be called golden, as the lips of an eloquent saint once upon a time were acclaimed golden by the faithful—this latest book is up to a certain point a book of travel.

I would not mislead a public whose confidence I court. The book is not a record of globe-trotting. I regret it. It would have been a joy to watch M. Anatole France pouring the clear elixir compounded of his pyrrhonic philosophy, his Benedictine erudition, his gentle wit and most humane irony into such an unpromising and opaque vessel. He would have attempted it in a spirit of benevolence towards his fellow men and of compassion for that life of the earth which is but a vain and transitory illusion. M. Anatole France is a great magician, yet there seem to be tasks which he dare not face. For he is also a sage.

It is a book of ocean travel—not, however, as understood by Herr Ballin of Hamburg, the Machiavel of the Atlantic. It is a book of exploration and discovery—not, however, as conceived by an enterprising journal and a shrewdly philanthropic

king of the nineteenth century. It is nothing so recent as that. It dates much further back; long, long before the dark age when Krupp of Essen wrought at his steel plates and a German Emperor condescendingly suggested the last improvements in ships' dining-tables. The best idea of the inconceivable antiquity of that enterprise I can give you is by stating the nature of the explorer's ship. It was a trough of stone, a vessel of hollowed granite.

He was St. Maël, a saint of Armorica. I had never heard of him before, but I believe now in his arduous existence with a faith which is a tribute to M. Anatole France's pious earnestness and delicate irony. St. Maël existed. It is distinctly stated of him that his life was a progress in virtue. Thus it seems that there may be saints that are not progressively virtuous. St. Maël was not of that kind. He was industrious. He evangelised the heathen. He erected two hundred and eighteen chapels and seventy-four abbeys. Indefatigable navigator of the faith, he drifted casually in the miraculous trough of stone from coast to coast and from island to island along the northern seas. At the age of eighty-four his high stature was bowed by his long labours, but his sinewy arms preserved their vigour and his rude eloquence had lost nothing of its force.

A nautical devil tempting him by the worldly suggestion of fitting out his desultory, miraculous trough with mast, sail and rudder for swifter progression (the idea of haste has sprung from the pride of Satan), the simple old saint lent his ear to the subtle arguments of the progressive enemy of mankind.

The venerable St. Maël fell away from grace by not perceiving at once that a gift of heaven cannot be improved by the contrivances of human ingenuity. His punishment was adequate. A terrific tempest snatched the rigged ship of stone in its whirlwinds and, to be brief, the dazed St. Maël was stranded violently on the Island of Penguins.

The saint wandered away from the shore. It was a flat, round island whence rose in the centre a conical mountain capped with clouds. The rain was falling incessantly—a gentle, soft rain which caused the simple saint to exclaim in great delight: "This is the island of tears, the island of contrition!"

Meantime the inhabitants had flocked in their tens of thousands to an amphitheatre of rocks; they were penguins; but the holy man, rendered deaf and purblind by his years, mistook excusably the multitude of silly, erect and self-important birds for a human crowd. At once he began to preach to them the doctrine of salvation. Having finished his discourse he lost

no time in administering to his unresisting congregation the sacrament of baptism.

If you are at all a theologian you will see that it was no mean adventure to happen to a well-meaning and zealous saint. Pray reflect on the magnitude of the issues! It is easy to believe what M. Anatole France says, that, when the baptism of the Penguins became known in Paradise it caused there neither joy nor sorrow but a profound sensation.

M. Anatole France is no mean theologian himself. He reports with great casuistical erudition the debates in the saintly council assembled in Heaven for the consideration of an event so disturbing to the economy of religious mysteries. Ultimately the baptized Penguins had to be turned into human beings; and together with the privilege of sublime hopes these innocent birds received the curse of the original sin, with the labours, the miseries, the passions and the weaknesses attached to the fallen condition of humanity.

At this point M. Anatole France is again a historian. From being the Hakluyt of a saintly adventurer he turns (but more concisely) into the Gibbon of Imperial Penguins. Tracing the development of their civilisation, the absurdity of their desires, the pathos of their folly and the ridiculous littleness of their quarrels, his golden pen lightens by relevant but unpuritanical anecdotes the austerity of a work devoted to a subject so grave as the polity of Penguins. It is a very admirable treatment, and I hasten to congratulate all men of receptive mind on the feast of wisdom which is theirs for the mere plucking of a book from a shelf.

JOSEPH CONRAD.

"The Age of Shakespeare." By Algernon Charles Swinburne. (London: Chatto. 6*s*.)

We shall always listen with the greatest attention to every word a man of Mr. Swinburne's distinction has to say on the literature of his nation. He possesses a gift that is higher than the usual philological worker's faculty: he is able to analyse the æsthetic impression. His new work on the age of Shakespeare bears testimony to this talent in a splendid way. The articles on a series of the most important contemporaries of Shakespeare, which are collected in this volume, are written for the literary epicure. They do not inform us about details. We should read this book after having carefully studied the dramatic works with which it deals. In its place we shall have the same extreme pleasure it affords to go walking round the

Salon on Varnishing Day with a great and knowing painter. For the author of this book has the delightful ingenuousness towards the past which is to be found in artists only and which is lost long since, as a rule, with historians. It sounds like a paradox, but it is nothing of the sort, to say that the charm of this historical work consists in the author's not being in any way a historian. What the Elizabethans themselves thought about the dramatists then living he never for a moment takes into consideration. Next to Jonson, Francis Beaumont and Chapman were without doubt looked upon as the greatest geniuses of the time. Mr. Swinburne scarcely mentions Beaumont, and to Chapman he dedicates only about six pages. The lion's share of his sympathies goes to Webster. Dekker and also Heywood are treated fully. Webster's position, next to Shakespeare, is unassailable according to Mr. Swinburne. Even most of the ancients possess less literary merits. "As a dramatic artist—an artist in character, action and emotion—the degenerate tragedian of Athens [Euripides] compared to the second tragic dramatist of England is as a mutilated monkey to a well-made man" (p. 36). The value of Mr. Swinburne's book certainly does not consist in criticism as general as the one quoted. Neither does he try to investigate the "technics," as it were, of the dramatists in question. In this respect Moulton's well-known book gives much more. But it is Mr. Swinburne's incomparable talent to show the different shades and *nuances* of the artistic impressions produced by the different authors, his way of demonstrating, for instance, the difference between the "noble horror" of one dramatist and the "vulgar shock of ignoble or brutal horror" of another that makes his book so valuable. There is no poetical *finesse* either in diction or situation or in characterdrawing of which he does not notice the peculiarity and for which he is not apt to find the characteristic expression. This gift is extremely rare and there are few among the living who possess it. It was this faculty on which Taine especially prided himself. "The facts in my 'History of English Literature,'" he said, "were already antiquated when the book was still in print, but the 'impressions' in it are eternal." The same might be said of Mr. Swinburne's critical writings. The only allowance that ought to be made, however, is that Mr. Swinburne is not as objective as Taine was. He would not be so great a poet if he were. Great artists never are wholly impartial. Browning once divided poets into the objective and the subjective sort, a division which more or less corresponds to Schiller's *naiv*

and *sentimentalische* poets. But in reality even the most "naïve" or "objective" ones never look at the other's works with the perfect impartiality which the gods sometimes give to "outsiders" born with taste and judgment. Goethe, for example, certainly did belong to the "objective" sort, and in spite of that he was entirely without understanding for the art of Heinrich von Kleist. The fervent admirer of Victor Hugo, who wrote "The Age of Shakespeare," nobody certainly will class among the objective poets. Algernon Charles Swinburne belongs to those few happy ones who have no need to be. If his judgment, according to the *communis opinio*, which still is in æsthetics the highest court of appeal, falls short of the mark, it remains notwithstanding of the highest value because it serves to explain a literary personality so interesting as Mr. Swinburne.

L. Levin Schücking.

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